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"OUR UNCLE, THE MAJOR"

*A Story of
New York
in
1765*

BY
JAMES OTIS



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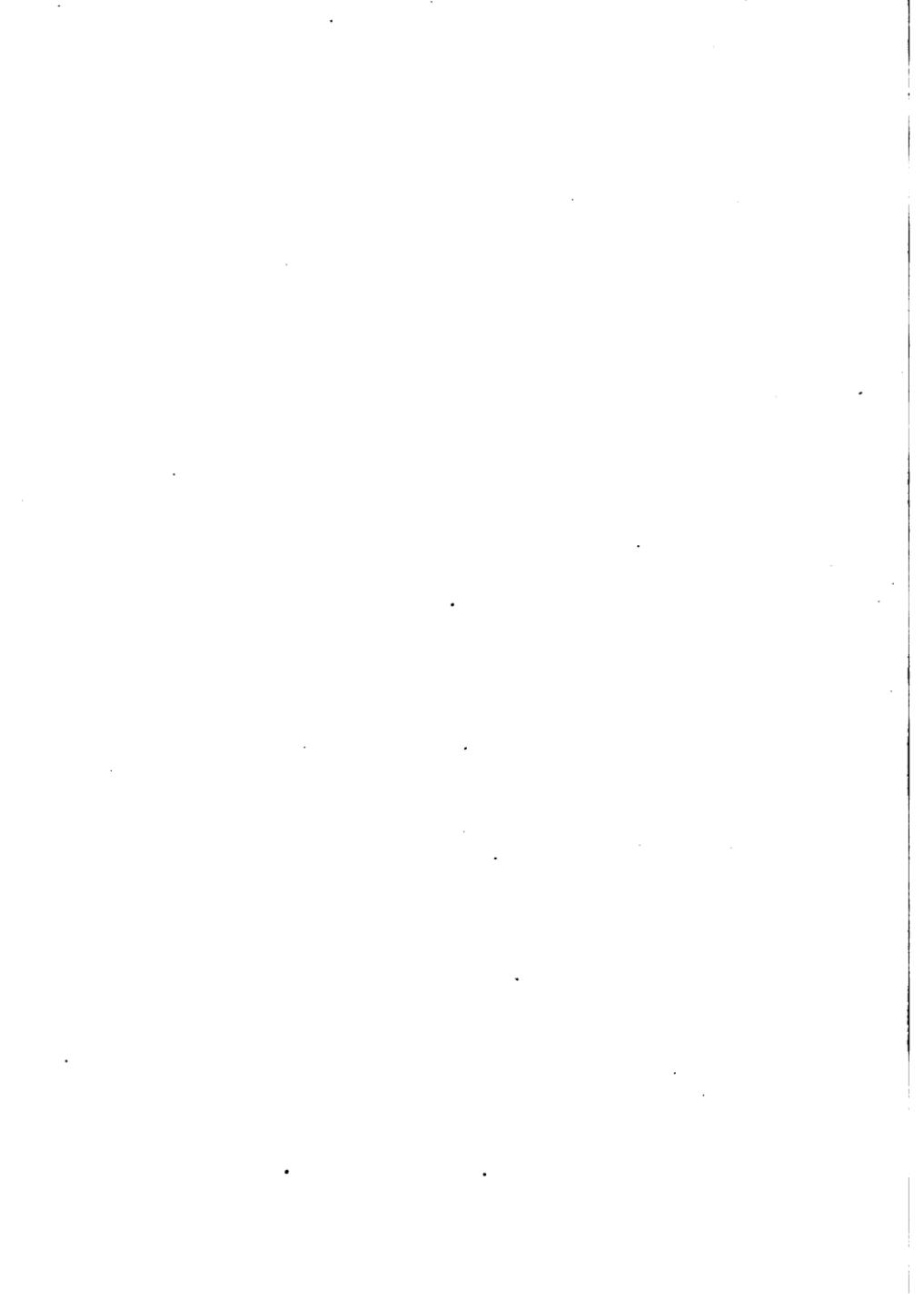
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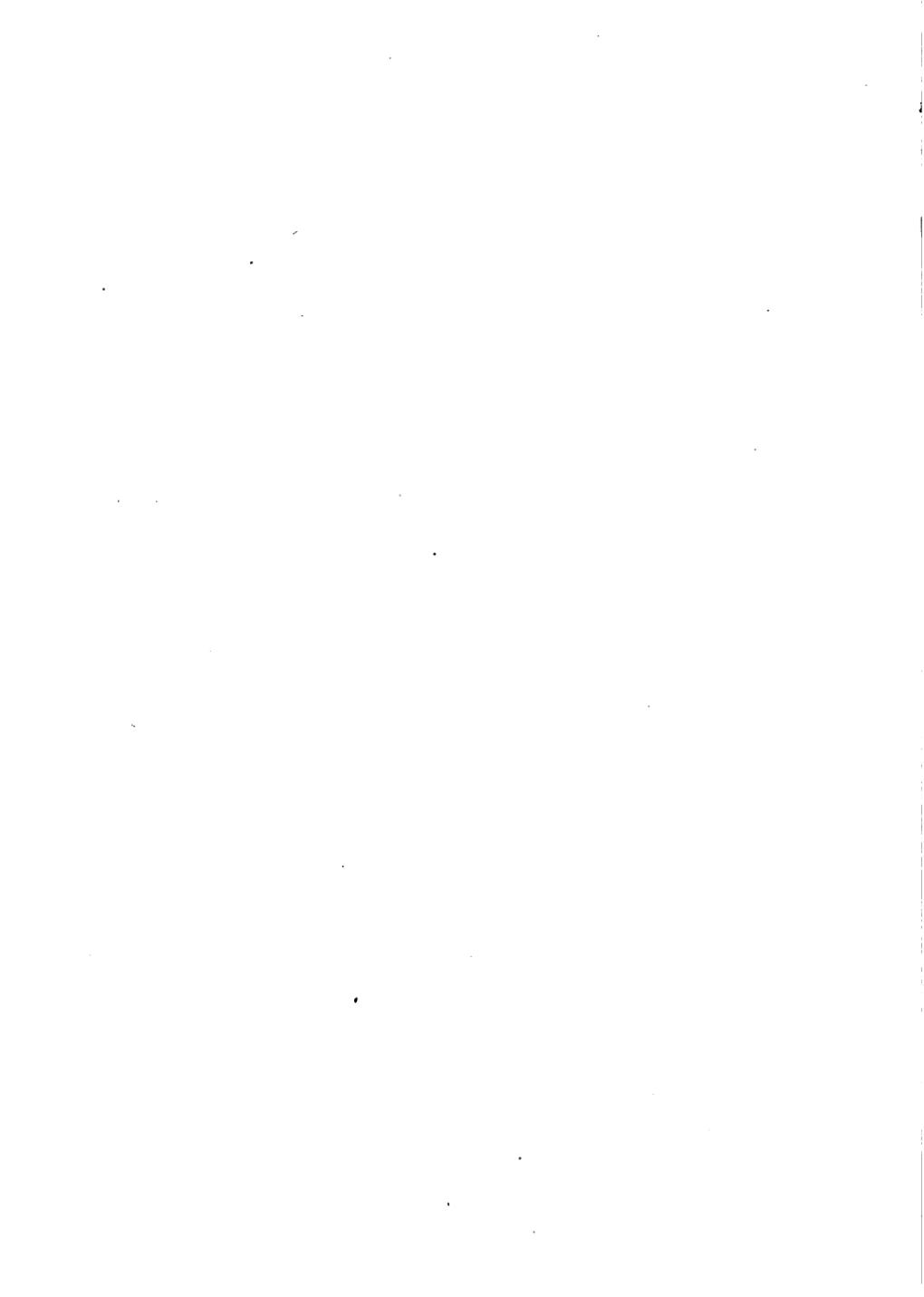
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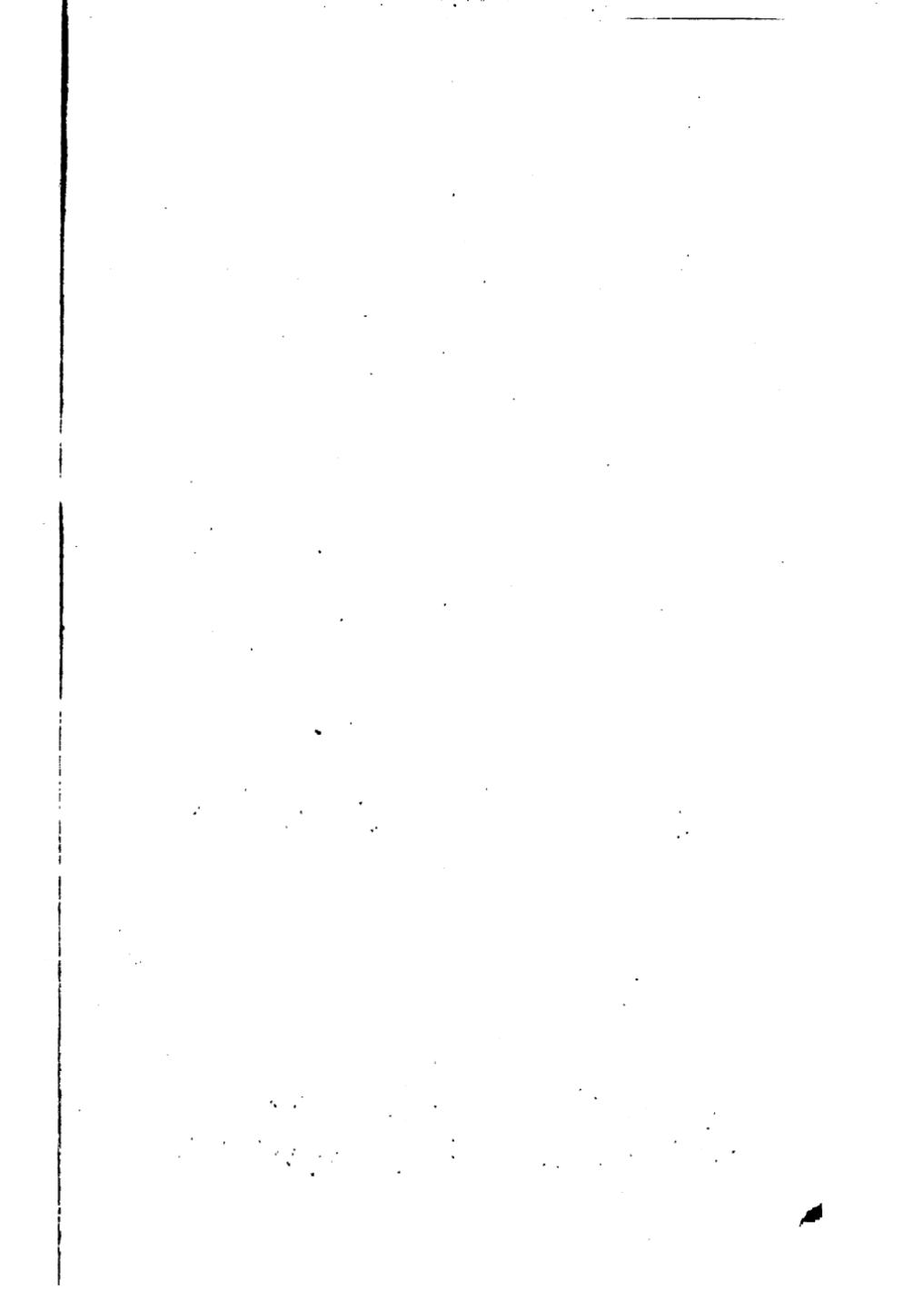
Our Uncle, the Major







LIKE HUNTED SQUIRRELS THE TWO RAN. See page 51.





“Our Uncle The Major”

A Story of New York in 1765.



JAMES OTIS



NEW YORK. Thomas Y. Crowell
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Note

“ON Tuesday, the sixth of May (1766) the joyful intelligence of the repeal of the Stamp Act” was brought to New York by Major James, who came passenger in the Hynde, from Plymouth. “The city was filled with delight. Bells rang a merry peal, cannons roared, and placards everywhere appeared calling a meeting of the citizens at Howard’s the next day to celebrate the event. Hundreds assembled, and marching in procession to ‘the fields,’ they fired a royal salute of twenty-one guns upon the spot where the City Hall now stands. The city was illuminated in the evening, and bonfires blazed at every corner.”—*LOSSING’S “Field Book of the Revolution.”*

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OUR UNCLE, THE MAJOR

CHAPTER I

THE PASSAGE BOAT

CAPTAIN SYLVANUS SEAMAN'S schooner, the Friendly Brothers, lay off Staten Island on this certain day of October in the year of grace 1765, ready to receive passengers or freight for New York city.

In the printed notices which Captain Seaman distributed among probable customers, or tacked up in conspicuous places, the Friendly Brothers was better known as the "Staten Island Passage Boat," and it was considered pleasing evidence that the city was rapidly increasing in size, that this vessel should be so well patronized as to warrant her leaving the dock in New York "each Tuesday and Friday," returning on Wednesday and Saturday, providing the wind had admitted of her arriving within a dozen hours of the schedule time.

Captain Seaman had never been known to object seriously when freight was offered him for transportation; but it was his boast that he intended the Friendly Brothers as a boat for passengers—particularly pleasure-seekers from the city, and on this certain afternoon he was in the best of spirits because fourteen persons had come on board, among them no less a personage than the principal farmer on the island, Nicholas Braun.

The captain had no need to make inquiries as to why he had so many patrons on this day. He had anticipated even a larger passenger list, because it had been said that on the morrow the citizens of New York, led by that association known as the Sons of Liberty, were to give undisputable proof that they would have none of the stamps which the home government had decided must be used in order to increase the revenues of the crown.

While Captain Seaman's patrons were seated on the deck waiting the appointed hour of sailing, for nearly all had come in from farms at a considerable distance from the harbor, and therefore, could not well time their arrival at the exact hour set for the departure of the

Friendly Brothers, the sole topic of conversation was regarding what might be done on the morrow.

The passengers spoke of the ship Edwards, which had sailed into the bay, convoyed by one of the king's frigates, nine days previously, and, on coming to anchor under the guns of Fort George, had found herself surrounded by sloops, schooners and ships with flags half-masted as if some great national bereavement was being mourned. They also discussed what was being done relative to the stamped paper in other colonies.

Captain Seaman, who was in a position to gather the latest news, because of being in the city twice each week, told his eager listeners that Master Oliver, the king's officer in Massachusetts, had been hanged in effigy at Boston; that the Rhode Island stamp-master had been obliged by the citizens to resign his office, and that Master Jared Ingersoll, the collector of Connecticut, had been forced to throw up his hat and shout three times "Liberty and Property," after surrendering his commission to the mob.

"It will be passing strange if the people of

New York bend submissively under the yoke," the worthy captain, who was known to be an ardent Whig, said, when it was possible to take part in the conversation. "Master McEvers of Hanover Square, has given up his office, fearing the people may do him a mischief. Master Coxe of New Jersey, Master Hughes of Pennsylvania, and every collector south of the Potomac river has followed the example of our stamp-master. I heard yesterday morning that the gentleman from Maryland who had intended to sell stamps in that province, is now in Fort George, hiding from those of his townspeople who would work him harm."

"Yes, yes," Nicholas Braun said, tapping the lid of his snuff-box nervously, "these are brave times; but will the people do more than make noises with their mouths? Rebellion is not a pleasant word."

"Have you seen the hand-bills which were put up on the street corners in New York on the night the Edwards arrived?" Captain Seaman asked in the tone of one who is wiser than his neighbors.

"I have been told that seditious bills were

posted; but never heard rightly what was written on them."

" Then I will show you one, and at the same time say for your information that such citizens as Master John Lamb, Isaac Sears, Alexander McDougall, and a score of others equally well known, were concerned in what you have much the same as called ' sedition. ' "

The captain took from an inner pocket of his sailor's jacket, a folded paper, which he spread out on his knees that all might see the following, written in a clear, bold hand:

“ Pro Patria.

"The first man that distributes or makes use of stamped paper let him take care of his house, person and effects. Vox POPULI.

“We Dare.”

Nicholas Braun followed with his finger each letter as he spelled out the words, and then wiped the perspiration from his forehead with a huge red handkerchief after the effort, although the day was far from being warm. He glanced furtively shoreward from time to time, until one of his fellow passengers asked with a laugh:

“Dost think of going back to the farm, Master Braun?”

“Of a truth it would be wiser. If the people of New York dare post up such sedition as is contained in yonder notice, what may they not do when the king’s officers force them to use the stamps?”

“You may be certain they’ll come to blows,” Captain Seaman replied in the same tone he would have employed if making the most pleasing announcement. “Major James has boasted that with five hundred artillerymen he can drive all the people from New York, and there may be an opportunity to prove his words. Matters might be different if the Governor, Sir Henry Moore, was here; Lieutenant-Governor Colden is so old that most like he will give his authority into the hands of such a man as Major James, in which case the trouble will be serious.”

While the passengers were thus discussing the possibility of an uprising against the king, and becoming so heated in the argument as to pay but little heed to what might be taking place in their own immediate neighborhood, a boat in which were two sumptuously dressed

white children, a negro woman with three short, straight scars on either cheek where she had been branded, and a white serving man, put off from the shore.

Captain Seaman was so much engrossed with impressing his Whiggish views upon a gentleman of Tory leanings, that he did not see the new-comers even when the boat was alongside; but his neglect made no unpleasant impression upon the late arrivals.

The serving man lifted over the rail a dainty little miss of eight or nine years, and a tiny young gentleman perhaps two years her junior, after which the scarred-faced negro woman followed, conducting the little ones to a bench on that portion of the deck astern which was reserved for the use of the female passengers.

"Now honies, you'se gwine ter set right hyar till de ship begins to scoot frou de water, an' when she comes up to de city you'se gwine fo' to call a chair, like you was grown up quality folks, an' go des as straight to yo' uncle's as de lazy lubbers kin carry you."

"Why do you tell us that, Kate? Of a surety you will go with us!"

"I'se bleeged fur to look out ober dat wuf-fless scamp of a Petrus, else he's nebber gwine ter get his wuk done dis day. Don' yer fret yo' head 'bout ole Kate, Missy Janet; but keep tight hol' ob Mars' Percy's han' all de time."

"What work has Petrus to do?" the little man asked sharply. "Our uncle, the Major, said that both you and he would remain with us until we got home."

"Dats des wha' we'se gwine ter do, honey. I reckon Petrus stan's a good show ob gettin' his back striped ef he don' do de job up in shape, an' I'se gwine ter wait tell its mos' done."

The woman moved toward the rail as she spoke, the man beckoning to her impatiently, and little Janet asked tremulously:

"You are coming back, Kate?"

"For certain, honey; we'se des' gwine on shore a jiffy."

By this time the woman was over the rail, and the man Petrus pulled desperately at the oars as if fearing pursuit.

There was a troubled look on the boy's face as he gazed up at his sister; but, observing that she was uneasy, he choked back the disagreeable lump in his throat as he said decidedly:

“ Petrus Mowry shall be flogged for leaving us here alone. Our uncle, the Major, will send him to the whipping post, where bad white servants are sent; but why did he take Kate with him? She is not allowed to leave us, as I've heard time and time again.”

“ Perhaps there is some reason which we do not understand, Percy.”

“ A servant can have no reason for leaving those whom she should serve; the Major has often told her so.”

Janet pointed out to the little fellow a flock of wild ducks which were skimming over the surface of the water near at hand, and, his attention thus diverted, he ceased to remember that the slave girl was neglecting her duty.

The moment had come when, according to his advertisements, Captain Seaman should have gotten the Friendly Brothers under way; but the political excitement ran so high that on this day—the first time in his life, so he said, the Passage Boat was delayed. A small sloop had come alongside, and her master announced to Captain Seaman the fact of his having left New York a few hours before.

“ What is going on by way of news?” the

captain asked, while his male passengers crowded to the rail in order the better to hear the reply:

“Brave doings, my masters, and before you’re four and twenty hours older Governor Colden will know that we of New York are no more to be put upon than the people of the other colonies.”

“Have they shown any signs of rebellion?” Master Nicholas Braun asked tremulously.

“And why should they not prove themselves men? Why did the Governor bring in the soldiers from the outposts, unless it was to whip us into submission? Rebellion? I’m not the one to say what it is which has caused such a commotion; but there’s a good bit of fire back of all this smoke. Since early morning the bells have been tolled and the beating of muffled drums can be heard in all public places. Crowds are parading the streets singing, and the merchants have given notice that they hold a public meeting this evening at the City Arms Tavern. To-morrow will see brave doings, or I’m much mistaken.”

The master of the sloop paused as if his budget of news had been emptied, and, looking

around at the sun much as though his attention had just been called to it, Captain Seaman announced in a loud voice that it was "high time the Friendly Brothers was under way."

"If this wind holds, you gentlemen will soon be in the thick of all the fine doings, and I dare venture to say you'll never regret having made the voyage at this time, whether you be Whig or Tory."

The captain had two negro slaves as crew, and after the proper commands had been given these "likely lads," as they would have been described by a dealer in human flesh, the schooner was soon in trim for the journey.

Not until he came aft to take the tiller was Captain Seaman aware that he had two passengers of quality; but once this fact was made known to him through the medium of his own eyes, he raised his fur cap and saluted with what he considered a most profound bow.

That he did not accost them was probably due to the fact that he believed the children had come on board under the charge of some one of the men who yet remained amidships, and also, perhaps, he realized that it was not

respectful for him to address first those who were evidently gentlefolks.

Not until the schooner was in the narrows, and the wind, tired of blowing in one direction all day, had died away entirely, leaving the Passage Boat becalmed, did either of the young passengers break the silence. Both had looked shoreward tremblingly when the Friendly Brothers left her mooring place and the servants were not to be seen; but neither ventured to remark upon the singular circumstance until the little vessel was swinging aimlessly around while her master whistled until his lips were dry, hoping to coax up so much of a breeze as would carry him to his destination. Then it was Percy, who asked almost timidly:

“Can you tell us, sir, why our servants did not come on board before you began the voyage?”

“Your servants, young sir, have they been left behind?”

“They did not come after leaving us here, sir,” Janet replied, taking her brother by the hand as if to show that she was prepared to defend him in case it became necessary.

“Bless my heart, I never so much as saw 'em,” the worthy captain said half to himself in a tone of perplexity.

“One was a negro woman with three scars on each cheek, and the other a servant whom our uncle bought some time since—Petrus Mowry. Kate told us that she must go back until Petrus had done his work, and we have not seen her since.”

“Shiver my timbers if they haven't run away, the pair of 'em! I'll be bound the man knew what's likely to happen in New York, an' said to himself that there wouldn't be any thorough search made till after this rumpus over the stamped paper has died away.”

The children, not understanding all the captain said, looked at him in silence and distrust until the master of the Friendly Brothers had time to turn the matter over in his mind, and then he asked:

“Is there no one on board whom you know quite well?”

Janet shook her tiny head decidedly, and Percy said energetically:

“Our uncle, the Major, doesn't allow us to make acquaintances among the people.”

"Your uncle, the Major, eh? Does it chance that you live on Staten Island?"

"Indeed no, sir. We were sent down to the Governor's farm to visit for a short time; but Kate claimed that it was necessary for us to go home this afternoon."

"Down to the Governor's farm?" Captain Seaman repeated, his eyes opening wider and wider each instant. "Are you by chance on friendly terms with his excellency?"

"Oh dear yes, sir, he is an old friend of ours, and we love him very dearly."

"The Governor's children on board my Passage Boat!" the worthy captain repeated as if astounded at his good fortune in having such distinguished patrons.

"But we are not the Governor's children," Percy replied quickly. "Since our mother died and we came over here in a big ship, we're no one's children; but we live with our uncle, the Major."

"Yes, the major," Captain Seaman repeated, rubbing his nose in perplexity. "But pray, young sir, what major do you mean?"

"Major James; he who commands the soldiers at the fort."

A blow delivered full in the face would not have surprised the Master of the Friendly Brothers more than did this statement, and he gazed long and curiously at the children as if in them he saw something odd or wonderful.

"You live with Major James—the king's officer who has declared he will drive all the people out of New York city with five hundred men—"

"He could do it alone, if he liked. Our uncle, the Major, is a soldier, and if the people here dare to be unruly, he will punish them very severely," the lad said in a shrill voice, as he stood rigidly erect by his sister's side.

"Well, well, well, of all the mix-ups I ever saw this is the worst!" Captain Seaman muttered half to himself. "Here's a couple of worthless servants run away when the major has his hands full, and these children are consequently shipped on board the Friendly Brothers for New York, at a time when Major James himself wouldn't dare show his nose on the street! They must keep quiet about their uncle, the Major, if we count on getting ashore safely."

"Indeed we shan't keep quiet!" the lad cried indignantly. "We are proud of our uncle, because he can do as he chooses in New York. His majesty has been pleased to speak of him as a brave soldier!"

"I'm afraid even his majesty isn't in very good odor just now," the captain muttered, and then, after a time of thought, he asked:

"What may your name be, my young lady?"

"Janet Courtyce, and my brother is Percy Courtyce."

"Where do you live in New York?"

"At Ranelagh."

"In what part of the city is that, may it please you?"

"Not far from Bowling Green, on the river, sir."

"Yes, yes, I remember now! I saw the spot once, and was told that Major James had taken it for his living place. Well, my young sir and lady, times are quite unpleasant for his majesty's servants just now in the city, an' I can guess that was the reason why your uncle sent you to Staten Island for a visit. But for those miserable servants, you'd be there now,

safe an' sound, whereas, it beats me to know how you can be got to Ranelagh."

"We shall call a chair when you come up to the dock, and be carried there," Percy said as if the matter was fully settled in his own mind.

"We may not arrive until well on to morning, unless the wind springs up, an' by that time there's no knowing what'll be afoot in the city." Then, raising his voice, the captain called to his passengers, who were yet talking politics to the exclusion of everything else, "Will you step this way a moment, gentlemen?"

"Isn't this part of the ship kept for the people of quality?" Percy asked gravely, while Janet looked forward with apprehension written on her pink and white cheeks. "In the ship on which we came over from England, no one was allowed near the stern save gentlemen or ladies."

"These are all gentlemen," the captain said in an apologetic tone, "and I wish to consult with them as to what we may do with you after we have arrived, for the case is a difficult one, as I look at the matter."

"It is not needed that such as they concern

themselves about us, sir," Janet said severely. "We shall take care of ourselves once the ship is in New York, unless our uncle, the Major, sends some one to look after us."

"But how can he do that, since, according to your own story, he supposes you will stay at Staten Island until after the storm of stamped paper has blown over? I only wish you were there, for he who takes it into his head to look after you just now, may find himself in trouble."

"My sister has said, sir, that we will care for ourselves," the lad said sharply, and, holding out his hand to the young lady with a bow, the two walked forward as the group of excited passengers came aft.

The captain gazed after the children with a look of real concern on his face. In politics he was opposed to the severer measures of the king, and had no love for those set in authority over the people of New York; but these were two children, passengers on board the Friendly Brothers, and it was as if he had had charge concerning them, despite the fact that they much the same as declined any aid which it might be in his power to render.

The men who had been summoned came aft readily, giving but little heed to the boy and girl who passed forward on the starboard side of the deck-house while they came down on the larboard deck, and, arriving near the tiller, all looked inquiringly at Captain Seaman, who was gazing after the children with an expression of bewilderment on his face.

The master of such a craft as the Passage Boat was not to be accosted with undue familiarity, and although these worthy citizens had paid full price for the journey, they treated the captain as if he was far above them in station.

“They’ll come to grief before getting to Ranelagh, unless a stopper can be put on their tongues; but I wouldn’t like to be the one who tried anything of the kind,” the captain muttered, not so much as glancing toward his passengers. “That boy can’t be much more’n six or seven years old, an’ yet you’d think he’d commanded a regiment of men. What’s to be done with ‘em beats me!”

“Did you speak to us, Captain Seaman?” Nicholas Braun asked deferentially, and, thus recalled to the business on hand, the master of

the schooner wheeled suddenly around as he asked :

“ Do you see those youngsters who have gone forward rather than stay here when you came? ”

“ Eh? What? Oh, the children? Yes, we see them,” Nicholas Braun said carelessly. “ Surely you didn’t call us aft, interrupting most pleasant discourse, because of those whiflets? ”

“ Whiflets! ” the captain cried as if shocked. “ Who do you suppose is their uncle, the Major? ”

“ Some swash-buckler in the king’s service, I fancy,” Master Braun replied, and he would have resumed his argument regarding the legality of taxation without representation, had not Captain Seaman cried excitedly :

“ Good people, yonder children claim Major James as their uncle! ”

Nicholas Braun staggered back aghast, and consternation suddenly appeared on every face.

“ Yes, gentlemen,” the master of the Friendly Brothers repeated solemnly, “ Major

James is their uncle, and they count on gaining his house alone, without aid, while every tongue in the city is wagging spitefully against that same officer!"

CHAPTER II

THE JOURNEY

THE schooner Friendly Brothers lay in the narrows swinging lazily to and fro on the current, and with never a breath of wind strong enough to lift the slight red vane at her mast-head.

In the very bow of the craft, overhanging the rail, lounged the two slaves evidently enjoying this time of indolence, and crooning low, weird melodies while they gazed down into the placid waters as if there they could see that fair land from which the thirst for gold had caused them to be so ruthlessly torn.

Amidships, Janet and Percy paced gravely to and fro giving but little heed to what might await them in the near future, and only fearful lest the captain or some of his passengers should forget what was supposed to be due to their station in life.

Aft, clustered around the now useless helm, were the sight-seers from Staten Island and the master of the Friendly Brothers, engaged in earnest discourse as they glanced furtively forward now and then toward the children who might, perchance, bring them into serious difficulties.

"There's this much to be counted on for a certainty," Captain Seaman said in a subdued tone, lest the children should overhear him, and smiting the rail with his fist to give due emphasis to the words: "We shan't fetch the city this tide, for in half an hour it'll be on the ebb, and we at anchor. It's bound to be well into the night before we can get under way again, and perhaps after daylight to-morrow when we run alongside the dock. Then, in case the citizens have started their row, what's to be done with these 'ere youngsters? 'Cordin' to the way the enemies of the Stamp Act are feeling just now, I shouldn't care to go around town with anybody belonging to Major James in my care, for it would be much the same as asking to be mobbed."

The expression of anxiety on Nicholas Braun's face deepened as he said, looking in-

quiringly from one to the other of those with whom he was supposed to be consulting:

"We didn't induce them to come on board, and are not obliged to worry our heads about a couple of children simply because they belong to an officer in his majesty's service."

"Suppose they had come aboard in the same fashion six months ago, Master Braun?" one of the company asked. "Would you then have said we needn't worry our heads about them?"

The worthy Master Braun flushed red, as he replied slowly:

"Six months ago Major James hadn't made himself so disliked by the people that he couldn't walk on the streets without being jeered at. If all Captain Seaman has told us be true, and I'm not questioning it in any way whatsoever, it would be a dangerous matter for any of us to go with the youngsters to Rane-lagh."

To this the other passengers assented readily, and were on the point of turning away as if the conversation had naturally come to an end, when the master of the schooner asked irritably:

"But what is to become of the children?"

" You might take them back to Staten Island, if the disturbance is great in New York."

" If it should be known that they were on board this vessel I would be ruined!"

To this remark the passengers also assented; but, not caring to prolong that which was disagreeable, one and all turned away, leaving the commander of the Friendly Brothers to solve the problem as best he might.

Meanwhile Janet and Percy had been walking slowly to and fro on the deck, both struggling desperately to uphold the dignity of their station in life; but woefully sick at heart through being thus virtually abandoned when the night was near at hand.

" You *do* believe, Janet, that we can get a chair at the dock to carry us home?" Percy said, trying in vain to repress the tremor which would creep into his voice.

" Yes, Percy, unless we arrive there in the night—"

" And if we should?"

" Then we must stay quietly on board this vessel until daylight, unless our uncle, the Major, sends for us before that time."

" I don't care to lie down in this dirty ship.

I looked into the cabin, and it isn't at all like what such a place should be."

"This is only a very common vessel, Percy, and our uncle would never have allowed us to come in it; but since we are here through no fault of our own, we should try to be brave."

"That's what I am doing, Janet; but it is very hard to be a gentleman after dark when one is alone."

The girl turned suddenly, threw her arms around the boy's neck, and in another instant would have given way to the tears which were hovering so near her eyelids; but just then Captain Seaman's passengers came forward to escape what had become a disagreeable conversation, and Janet straightened her tiny body very suddenly as she walked aft once more, holding Percy's hand in hers.

That she had been able to comport herself in the presence of these common people as be-fitted her station, was a source of such satisfaction to Mistress Janet that much of the grief which had so nearly overwhelmed her, subsided, and she was able to comfort Percy in his distress.

"Don't let the captain of the ship see that

you are afraid," she whispered, and the lad replied fiercely :

" I'm not afraid, Janet Courtyce! I am only angry because Kate and Petrus did not attend to their duty before running away!"

Then Janet pressed his arm warningly, for Captain Seaman had his ears pricked up eager to overhear what the children were saying.

Thus warned, Percy fell silent, and his sister led him to the bench which they had vacated as the men came aft at the captain's summons.

When five minutes had passed the master of the Friendly Brothers grew uneasy under the steady gaze of the two children. He shifted restlessly from one foot to another, stared up at the sky and then at the waters, whistled again and again, and, finally, unable to bear the scrutiny, said with an assumption of carelessness :

" I reckon there ain't much show of our getting alongside the dock till well toward morning."

The children made no reply to this remark, and the captain fancied they gazed at him accusingly, as if he alone was responsible for their troubles.

After another brief time of silence he suggested, rather than announced as a fact:

“ You must be hungry by this time.”

Percy appeared as if on the point of speaking, but Janet pinched his arm, and he remained silent.

There was no good reason why he should remain near the useless helm, and, unable longer to endure the steady gaze of his young passengers, the captain went forward to where the men were conversing in low whispers, giving token by their quick glances aft from time to time that the subject of their discourse was Major James’ wards.

“ Why did you pinch me, Janet? I *am* hungry,” the boy whispered, and his sister drew him nearer to her side as she replied:

“ So am I, sweetheart; but what would our uncle, the Major, say if he knew we were willing to eat in such a dirty ship as this? ”

“ Think you he would refuse food if he were here? ”

“ I am certain of it, Percy.”

“ Perhaps I’m not so very hungry, Janet; but where are we to sleep? The captain said we wouldn’t get to New York till morning.”

“ We'll sit right here.”

“ But you are shivering with the cold.”

“ It is better to suffer a little now, than be shamed by the reproaches of our uncle when we get home. Sit nearer to me; this cloak is large enough for both.”

Percy nestled by his sister's side, and she covered him with her outer garment, thereby depriving herself of the greater portion; but without his knowledge.

Then Captain Seaman, ill at ease, and reproaching himself for having allowed the children to board the vessel without his first knowing all the circumstances, came aft once more.

“ The tide has turned, and the Friendly Brothers is at anchor,” he said hesitatingly. “ Now we can count on staying hereabout for a good six hours, and you children had best go below. I'll fix my bunk up in decent fashion, and there you can sleep until we are at Old Slip.”

“ We do not care to go into your cabin, sir,” Janet said stiffly, and, rousing himself ever so slightly, Percy added:

“ We will stay here, sir.”

“ It strikes me that them 'ere children are too

proud to eat or sleep on board the Friendly Brothers," the captain said to his male passengers when he had gone forward once more.

"If even the children of the aristocrats can take on such high and mighty airs, it is little wonder that the colonists are ready for sedition, rebellion, or whatever you please to call it," one of the passengers said irritably, and Nicholas Braun nodded his head in acquiescence, adding placidly:

"Since they stay on deck we may go below without fear of trespass. This wind has chilled me to the bone."

"Then think how those little ones must suffer," the captain said with a sigh. Perhaps he had children of his own.

"They've got pride enough to keep themselves warm, and if it pleases the youngsters to stay on deck, well and good; I'm going below."

Master Braun suited the action to the words, and as he was literally forced to squeeze his huge body through the narrow companion-way, Janet whispered to Percy:

"Would you like to stay in that dark place with such a great pig as that man?"

The boy made no reply, and Mistress Janet said reprovingly :

“ Oh, Percy, would you be willing to do that which would displease our uncle, the Major ? ”

“ I’m ready to stay here with you Janet ; but it is so cold, and I wonder if our uncle would really sit on this hard bench rather than go into the cabin, no matter how dark and dirty it may be ? ”

“ But think that all these people will go down there—perhaps even the captain himself.”

“ That’s what I am thinking of, Janet ; but it doesn’t make me any the warmer.”

Then the girl covered him yet more closely, at her own expense, and one by one the passengers went below until that tiny cabin must have been literally packed with human beings.

Captain Seaman followed his patrons ; but it might readily be seen that he was not comfortable in mind, for he came up the companion-way more than once to make certain the young passengers were comparatively safe.

Each time on looking out he saw Janet sitting bolt upright, holding Percy’s head on her

knees, and gradually giving him more and more of the cloak until none remained upon her own shoulders.

The air was not excessively cold, even though it was so late in the season; but there was a certain chill coming over the water which caused even one so well seasoned to wintry blasts as the master of the Friendly Brothers, to draw his coat more closely, and that Janet was suffering there could be no question.

Once again, when he went to arouse the crew, after the tide had turned, that they might raise the anchor, did the captain try to persuade the children to seek the shelter of the cabin.

"We shall be getting under way soon now, and you had better try to take what little comfort you can," he whispered to Janet; but she replied stiffly:

"Our uncle, the Major, would be better pleased if we remained here."

Captain Seaman realized that perhaps the little ones would indeed be quite as comfortable on deck. In that tiny cabin were fourteen full-grown men, all breathing so heavily that a constant rumble came through the companion-way,

and, as he had had due experience, the air was none too pure below the deck.

Percy awakened when the schooner was being carried toward her destination by the tide, and the sun was slowly dispelling the gloom of night. The little fellow's nose was crimson with the cold, and his body so benumbed by having remained in a cramped position many hours, that it was only after some difficulty he could stand upright.

Then Janet said soothingly, giving no heed to the fact that she was suffering even more than her brother:

“We will walk from one end of the vessel to the other, and mayhap we shall grow warm.”

“The niggers will soon be getting coffee ready, and a steaming hot mugful will fix you up in great shape.”

Janet half turned, cheered by the thought of the warm beverage; but straightway she remembered what her uncle might say when he was told that his niece and nephew had made so free as to join the common passengers in their morning meal, and she said stiffly:

“I thank you, sir; but Percy and I can wait until we have arrived at Ranelagh.”

"You're not like to get there till after sunrise," he said coaxingly, and added to himself, "Perhaps not then, if things are going on in the city as we have good reason for believing."

This last vain attempt discouraged the captain, and perhaps vexed him a trifle; at all events he made no further effort to minister to the comfort of the children, and the other passengers, as they came on deck one by one, did no more than bestow curious glances at them from time to time.

Janet and Percy had walked briskly to and fro until the inmates of the cabin appeared, when they went aft to their bench, decidedly warmed and refreshed by the exercise.

The negroes made coffee, fried fish and baked corn-bread for breakfast, the passengers going forward to partake of the meal; but the children remained in the stern of the schooner wrapped in their own dignity.

Once, when Captain Seaman was forward and they comparatively alone, Percy said with a certain tone of longing in his voice:

"That must be good coffee. It has even a better odor than our uncle's."

"Turn your head the other way," Janet replied resolutely. "The vessel is now so near New York that it can't be a great while before we are at Ranelagh, and it would be too bad if we gave way to our longings after having acted properly throughout all the long night."

With the coming of the sun the wind had sprung up once more; the sails of the Friendly Brothers were filled to roundness, and the spray which shot up before the vessel's bow told that she was moving through the water at a very satisfactory rate of speed.

In the distance could be seen the spars of the king's ships which lay near about the battery, and the city front, even as far up as Peck's Slip, was bordered with trading vessels and merchantmen of every description.

Captain Seaman's passengers were in a fine state of excitement as the schooner neared the land, and while she was yet a considerable distance from the slip it could readily be seen that something more than the ordinary routine of business was taking place on shore.

Masses of the people were moving swiftly from this point to that; drums were beating; bells were ringing; flags flying half-masted,

and a general confusion and bustle apparent everywhere as far as the eye could reach, save in the immediate vicinity of Bowling Green, where all was remarkably quiet by contrast.

Except the sentinels, no one could be seen in the fort. Every approach was carefully closed, and those familiar with the place, as was Captain Seaman, noted the fact that two cannon had been placed opposite the main gate as if the authorities feared lest the mob, having forced an entrance, would need to be turned.

No array of soldiers could have presented a more threatening aspect than did this absence of men, and the grim preparations for defence.

"It looks as if more than a noisy demonstration might be afoot this day," Captain Seaman said in a low tone to Nicholas Braun, and the latter muttered under his breath:

"I have been a great fool for coming here at such a time. The king's officers will remember the faces they see this day, and in the future punishment will be dealt out. I had better have staid in my fields."

"You are in no danger, Master Braun, for, an' it so pleases you, there's nothing to pre-

vent your remaining on board the Friendly Brothers till the trouble blows over. My greatest worry is as to how we'll get our youngsters across the city."

"There's little fear they'll be molested," one of the other passengers said confidently, and the captain replied as he pointed to a throng of citizens moving along the water-front:

"There's many a reckless blade among such as have gathered here, and once it is known the children are wards of Major James', I fear much rough play may ensue."

"They have only to keep quiet tongues as to their kinship with the major, and all will go well," Master Braun said as if the matter was of but little consequence.

"Ay, but there's the rub," the captain cried. "Those youngsters will keep his name in their mouths all the time."

"Not after I have explained to them that it won't be safe," Nicholas Braun replied in a confident tone as he went aft, bent on doing a good deed.

Janet and Percy were sitting on the bench watching sharply all which could be seen ashore, and showing no signs of anxiety, as in-

deed they had little cause, not understanding the mischief which was afoot that day.

"Look you, youngsters," Master Braun said with a ponderous attempt at familiarity, "there's like to be trouble for you ashore if it's known that you're akin to Major James, so take my advice like good children, and keep your mouths closed in case you're questioned. A little bit of a lie wouldn't go amiss, if it so be anyone thinks your faces have been seen in the Governor's coach."

"Gentlemen don't lie, sir!" Percy said sharply, rising to his feet while the worthy Master Braun was speaking, but taking good care not to interrupt him.

"Hoity, toity, young sir, would you teach your grandmother to suck eggs?" the boer cried, his face flushing a deeper red than nature and the elements had bestowed upon it. "You're like to find a rough road this day unless you put a bridle on your tongue."

"My brother will tell the truth, sir, whatever may be the road," Janet said with a fine show of dignity, and Master Braun was glad to go forward once more.

"They are just headstrong aristocrats, an'

we can do no more than let 'em work out their traverse without offering advice that's scorned," a thin passenger said scornfully, and the remainder of the party appeared to be of his opinion.

The schooner was soon warped alongside the dock, and the hawsers had no more than been made fast when a mob of men and boys came down from the fish market on Dock street at full speed, shouting orders for Captain Seaman to half-mast his flag.

While this command was being obeyed, and prudence dictated that there should be no delay, the male passengers went ashore, being almost immediately swallowed up by the throng.

Janet and Percy were standing near the rail amidships when Captain Seaman again had time to attend to them, and the former asked as if the request was a demand which must not be neglected:

"Will you call a chair for us, sir? It would not please our uncle, the Major, if we walked across the city while there were so many people on the streets."

"I'm thinking it won't please him overly much to have you in any portion of the city

this day," the captain said half to himself, and added in a louder tone, " You must see for yourself, young lady, that there's no such thing to be thought of, as hiring a chair just now. It will be wisest to wait till I can persuade some one to go to the fort and tell the Major where you are, or, if the Friendly Brothers is not pleasing to you, why not go with me to the King's Arms Inn? There you'll be almost certain to come across those who are friendly with your uncle."

" We must go directly to Ranelagh, and if no chair is to be had, surely we can walk as far as the fort, where will be found our friends," Janet replied firmly, holding Percy by the hand as if for mutual protection.

By this time a score or more of the mob, attracted by the sight of two richly dressed children, gathered nearby, and Captain Seaman did not dare speak aloud that which it seemed necessary Janet should know, therefore he stepped a trifle closer as he whispered confidentially:

" It musn't be known, young lady, that you want to see the Major."

" Why not? " Percy asked shrilly. " There

is no reason why we should not tell these people that Major James is our uncle, and demand that they fall back so we may make our way up the dock!"

"Major James!" one of the turbulent spirits, who was rather the worse for what he had drank, shouted. "Here be some of the Major's family, good people, an' you're to fall back, cap in hand, so they can come ashore without touching such as us!"

CHAPTER III

THE MOB

SEVERAL moments elapsed before the mob fully understood the meaning of the words which one of their number had spoken, and they might not have been so quick-witted but that a view of the children, standing proud and defiant near the schooner's rail, aided in a solution of the riddle.

Then suddenly the words were caught up from one portion of the vast throng to the other, until those gathered in front of the Exchange must have gathered the import:

“ Fall back for Major James’ family! The English gentleman who counts on driving us from New York with a few hundred of his artillerymen, begs that you will give his family an escort! ”

By this time Janet began to realize that her uncle’s name was not reverenced by the people

as by herself, for the tone in which the words were uttered sounded harsh and menacing; but she shrank not from the angry men. If there was any movement of her slight body, it was forward, rather than backward, and Percy asked wonderingly :

“ What do the people mean, Janet? Why do they not fall back for us? ”

Without replying, the girl turned toward where the captain of the Friendly Brothers stood looking woefully distressed in mind, and asked :

“ Are all these enemies of our uncle, the Major? ”

“ Yes, young lady, all these and hundreds more who are roaming the streets this day. You had better go down into the cabin, and I will try to coax this crowd away. It’s too late now to think of going to the King’s Arms.”

“ It’s not too late to go home,” Percy said shrilly, and leaning over the schooner’s rail, he cried angrily :

“ Stand back there, or our uncle, the Major, will teach you a lesson in good manners! ”

“ We’ll do the teaching this day! ” some one

shouted, and then came the cry; repeated again and again until it could be heard far up the dock :

“ Make way for Major James’ family! Way for the kinsmen of him who counts on driving us from the city! ”

The mob, excited by the bold bearing of the children, were rapidly working themselves into a frenzy, and Captain Seaman understood that it might be dangerous for the young people to remain where they could be seen so distinctly.

He tried to make Janet understand the situation, at the same time urging her to take refuge in the cabin if only for a few moments; but she, believing that her uncle was, next to Governor Colden and General Gage, the most important man in the city, could not be persuaded that the mob would dare work harm to her or her brother.

“ We shall go to Ranelagh, sir,” she replied, and would have scrambled over the rail but that the captain restrained her by force, as he whispered :

“ Matters have gone so far that I can’t protect you. These men are ripe for any mischief,

and you must wait at least until I can get word to some of the Whig leaders, who'll speedily put an end to such work."

"My brother will protect me," she said loudly, struggling to release herself from the captain's detaining grasp, and Percy, almost beside himself with rage at seeing his sister vainly trying to move away from the officer, cried out shrilly:

"Let her go. Let go, I say! She is Janet Courtyce!"

"I'm a fool to mix up in any such mess!" the captain muttered angrily as he stepped back a few paces. "Do the best I might, it would only result in making enemies on both sides, and it seems that even the children of those who serve the king are too fine to be touched by such as me!"

"She is Janet Courtyce!" some one in the throng cried mockingly, and the others caught up the words until they were passed far back amid the mob, which by this time completely blocked the slip as far as the fish market. "She is Janet Courtyce!"

Janet's face was flaming red as she stepped up on the rail to leap down on the dock; but

before it was possible to carry out her intentions a burly negro, half drunken, caught her in his arms, kissed her red cheek, and let her down amid the shouting, reeling, frenzied men.

On seeing his sister in the hands of the negro, Percy seized a wooden belaying pin and leaped over the rail, striking the black giant a blow on the hip which would have been serious to an ordinary man.

“Ah, ha! my young master, you’re beginnin’ young to put the whip to us, eh?” the negro cried as he raised Percy aloft in the air, after having disarmed him, and it pleased his drunken humor to shout to his companions, “Which of you were talkin’ about lootin’ the Major’s house? Here’s a young spitfire who shall show us how it can best be done!”

The mob screamed and yelled yet more furiously, and Janet strove in vain to gain the side of the man who held her brother.

“You shall go to the whipping post for this!” Percy cried, struggling vainly in the iron-like grasp of the giant. “My uncle, the Major, will see to it that you are severely punished!”

"His uncle will send us to the whipping post!" the negro cried with a laugh, and these words were repeated as had been the others.

It was now absolutely impossible for Captain Seaman to make the slightest effort at aiding the children. When Janet and Percy went ashore the throng moved slowly up toward Dock street, and the master of the Friendly Brothers could not have come within reach of those who were in such sore straits, strive as he might.

It was useless for Percy to struggle in the grasp of the black giant; iron bands would hardly have held him more firmly than did those muscular arms, and soon, child though he was, this fact became impressed upon his mind. With the knowledge that he was helpless came fear for his sister's safety, and he alternately threatened and implored, the tears streaming from his eyes despite the brave efforts to restrain them, as the mob surged slowly up Dock street into Broad.

Janet had ceased to think of herself; she believed Percy's life was in imminent danger, and, regardless of personal peril or pain, she

made desperate attempts to gain the side of the negro; but was held back through pure love of mischief by those of the mob nearest her.

By the time the throng had reached the corner of Broad and Beaver streets it numbered many hundreds, and was gathering in strength and frenzy each instant. The five hundred artillerymen, with whom Major James had declared he could drive all the inhabitants from the city, would have found it difficult even to rescue the children at that moment.

The lawless, shouting men had until now no apparent purpose; they were moved here or there as fancy dictated to the foremost, but on arriving at the intersection of these streets, from which a view could be had of Bowling Green, some one shouted:

“To the fort! To the fort! Give the British Major a chance to carry out his threats!”

At the moment a company came through Ducal street bearing a large white banner, on which was painted the words:

“The Stamp Act.
England’s Folly and America’s Ruin.”

This was attached to a stout pole, and the negro who held Percy was called upon to act as flag-bearer.

Perhaps he had tired of using the boy as a toy, or, the idea of leading the mob with the banner as an emblem of authority tickled his fancy; however it was, he dropped Percy quickly, and raised aloft the sheet of canvas which would have been an exceedingly heavy burden for any save one equally large and strong.

Janet flung her arms around the boy's neck when he was set down almost at her feet, and during ten minutes or more the two were whirled here or there as the mob advanced, until, finally, they were cast out from amid the reckless rioters as leaves are thrown on the shore by a turbulent stream.

Until the mob had passed it was not possible for them to speak; but when they were disentangled from the human snarl, Janet said hurriedly:

"Let us run, Percy! We must get away before those horrible men come back!"

"We'll go to the fort and tell our uncle, the Major, how we have been treated!" the boy

cried angrily. "That negro shall be flogged, first for having dared to kiss you, and again for carrying me in his dirty arms! We will go to the fort at once!"

"That cannot be—at least, not now. All those wretched people have gone there, and we would fall into their clutches again. Run up this street with me, until the soldiers have driven them away. After that has been done we will go to the Governor's, if we cannot get to Ranelagh."

Percy's anger was so great that he was not disposed to listen to his sister's plan; but when she led him to the corner of Beaver street, and he could see that the rioters literally choked that thoroughfare as far as his view extended, the impossibility of doing as he desired was gradually forced upon him. In addition to the lawless throng in the distance, small parties of rough looking citizens, scenting mischief, were coming from every direction, and there was good reason for the children to fear that they might find themselves prisoners again.

After delaying two or three minutes Percy agreed to do as Janet advised; but only after she had promised that their uncle, the Major,

should be made acquainted with all the indignities that had been heaped upon them.

"Of a surety I will tell him," she said in reply to Percy's demand for a pledge. "We can do no less than that, and he will have those miserable people punished very severely. Now let us run, for I like not the appearance of yonder men."

Grasping Percy by the hand she led him toward Prince's street, and like hunted squirrels the two ran until they were come to Smith street where they halted involuntarily, not knowing in which direction safety might be found.

Possibly Janet regretted having refused Captain Seaman's escort to the King's Arms Inn; even the cabin of the Friendly Brothers would have been a pleasant refuge after their experience with the mob.

As they stood undecided on the street corner, a throng of men came toward them from the direction of the docks, and they fled straight on to William street, gathering additional speed as they heard some one shout:

"There are the youngsters who claim Major James for an uncle! Let's have after them!"

“Faster, Percy! Faster!” Janet cried in terror. “It would be dreadful if we were caught again!”

Four or five half-grown boys pressed forward, and the chase promised a speedy ending, for the pursuers could run three yards to the fugitives’ one. This Janet understood; but she made every exertion, urging Percy to keep pace with her, and when the lawless lads were almost within reach of their prey, a woman appeared from around the corner of King street.

“Oh help us! Help us!” Janet cried breathlessly, sinking from exhaustion and terror at the feet of the stranger just as one of the lads seized her by the shoulder.

The new-comer was a motherly looking woman, evidently one of the lower classes to whom little Mistress Janet would not have deigned to speak four and twenty hours previous, and she stood the fugitives’ very good friend.

“Get back, you little villains!” she cried, striking with her open hand the lad who had a hold upon Janet, and delivering the blow with such good will that he was hurled back upon the toes of his comrades. “What do you mean by tormenting a couple of children?”

"They are akin to Major James, an' we count on badgerin' 'em a bit for their uncle's sake," one of the pursuers said boldly; but at the same time taking very good care to keep beyond reach of that strong and ready arm.

"I'll see that you're given over to the watch unless you clear out in short order," the woman cried as she gathered Janet in her arms, and gave Percy the protection of her dress, from behind the folds of which the little fellow peered out in wild-eyed terror.

"You'll have a fine time huntin' up the watch, Mistress Brower," the lad who had received the blow whimpered, as he stroked tenderly his cheek on which was the imprint of four fingers. "This day we of New York are showin' the king's officers that they can't put upon us as they've been doin'."

"You're showing the king's officers!" Mistress Brower cried contemptuously. "It's the like of you who are casting discredit on what Master Sears and those of his kind are trying to do! Go to your homes, for there'll be trouble in plenty to those who are making fools of themselves this day. You are shaming a good cause, and deserve to be soundly flogged.

To your homes, or I'll see to it that the captain of the watch has the name of every one!"

The lads stepped backward a few paces, as if ashamed of retreating from a woman, and then, as she threatened once more to lodge information against them, they turned and ran like whipped dogs until lost to view in the distance.

Janet no longer thought of what her uncle, the Major, might say when he knew she had made a confidant of one so far beneath her in the social scale; she was only conscious of the fact that she had found a friend, therefore the poor child, giving free vent to her tears, told all the story of their abandonment by the servants, the journey in the Passage Boat, and the rough usage to which they had been subjected since arriving in the city.

This story was all the more pathetic because of the children's appearance; the clothing of both had been torn and soiled since they came ashore from the Friendly Brothers. Their faces were tear-stained and not overly clean after their long night's vigil, and in every detail they appealed to the good woman's heart.

"It's a shame that such a disgrace should

have come upon the city, as that two innocent children are treated in this fashion!" Mistress Brower exclaimed indignantly. "Is it true that Major James is your uncle?"

"Indeed he is," Percy cried sternly, "and these people who have been so wicked shall be soundly flogged."

"They deserve it, my little man; but this city is turned upside down to-day, and it isn't well for you to talk of punishment until after your uncle has you in his keeping. I wonder what is to be done with you?"

"We want to go to Ranelagh," Mistress Janet said with a sob. "We're tired and hungry."

"Of course you are, my sweet; but where is this Ranelagh?"

"Where our uncle lives, not far from the Governor's house."

"Ah, now I remember. That is the name Major James gave to his mansion. It has an outlandish sound; but, faith! a man has a right to call his home what he will."

"And you can show us the way?" Janet asked.

"It wouldn't be well, my child, to set out

until the city has quieted down a bit. There are lawless men about—more than I ever dreamed could be found in New York, and it isn't safe for you to be in the streets this day."

"But we must go home," Janet said firmly.

"So you shall, my child, as soon as it may safely be done. These brawlers would like nothing better than to get you in their power, and the wonder of it is that you managed to slip away after the black had you in his arms. Come to my home; there you may have food and sleep, and this evening, after the soldiers have beaten down the mob, I will take you to Ranelagh."

"We must go now," Percy cried. "My uncle, the Major, will not allow these vile people to harm us!"

"Your uncle didn't prevent the black from doing what he pleased, and the people are in such a state of excitement that there's no telling what they might do. Besides, how may the Major aid you while he's shut up in the fort?"

"He will come out with his soldiers and shoot those vile men!"

"I am told that the mob are in front of the fort openly defying the king's troops, and you

may be certain, young sir, that Major James is of the opinion that he should stay where he is, otherwise he would have cleared the streets before this. If you come with me I will do my best to make you comfortable, and when the city is quiet will go to Ranelagh with you."

By this time Janet had come to understand that she could not do as she pleased, even though her uncle was so high in authority, and Mistress Brower's invitation was not to be slighted when they were friendless and helpless.

"We will be very glad to go with you," she said, taking Percy by the hand as if to prevent him from making any objection, "and when we get home once more, I will see that you have such a present as will repay you—my own gold chain, which is worth many, many shillings."

"Bless your heart, my child, I wouldn't take your trinkets, for I'm not doing this in order to gain money. You are two poor, helpless children, and there's not a mother in New York who wouldn't give you a shelter, even though you are akin to him who would drive us from our homes with his soldiers."

"Don't you like our uncle?" Percy asked hotly.

"We won't talk about it, my little man. There are many in this city who have cause to dislike the officer who treats the common folk as if they were dust beneath his feet."

"Why shouldn't he—"

Janet covered Percy's mouth with her hand lest he should say that which would give the good woman offense, and then said with a courtesy:

"We will be very thankful to go to your home, and I believe you will tell us what is best to do."

It was indeed high time they gained a shelter; shouts and cries in the distance told that a party of the rioters were coming in such numbers that Mistress Brower might not be able to protect the little fugitives as readily as when she had rescued them from the boys.

The good woman led the way, Janet falling back as if to shield herself from view; but in reality to whisper in Percy's ear:

"You must be careful not to say anything which might offend her. She lives, most likely,

in some dreadful place; but we can stay there until it is safe to go home, and we'll try not to pay attention to anything which is disagreeable. Her house can't be worse than the cabin of the ship in which we came from Staten Island."

Percy nodded his head to show that he understood; but Janet was by no means confident he would do as she wished, and to lessen the chances of offending their newly made friend, she added:

"A gentleman would be very careful not to say anything disagreeable to those whom he visited."

"I have promised our uncle that I would be a gentleman, and if what you say is true, I'll not so much as open my mouth while I am there."

Mistress Brower led the children to Cliff street, and entered a modest little dwelling situated in the rear of a warehouse.

In this quarter of the city there was no evidence of a riot, save now and then when the cries of a mob could be heard in the distance, and the dwelling was so neat and cleanly that

Janet felt as if for the first time since Kate and Petrus deserted them, were they really in safety.

Mistress Brower's home offered a sharp contrast to the splendors of Ranelagh; but it was a refuge not to be despised, and both the children were well content to look upon the good woman as a friend, despite the difference in their social stations.

They were given an opportunity to make a simple toilet, after which a plain, though appetizing, breakfast was set before them.

When they had been in the Cliff street dwelling an hour they were thoroughly comfortable in body once more, and then it was that Mistress Brower said :

“ It's understood you can't with safety go home until nightfall; your uncle won't worry about you, because he doesn't know you are in the city, therefore I propose that you gather up some sleep. You shall have beds in the same room, and I promise to waken you without delay in case the city grows so quiet before dark that you can go safely to Ranelagh. My husband will be home by noon, and then we shall know more about the rioting.”

To this the little fugitives agreed, and after they were asleep good Mistress Brower set about cooking such dainties as she thought might tempt their appeties, knowing full well that food is the great solace for young people, however sore their distress.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIOTERS

Not until late in the afternoon did the children awaken, thoroughly refreshed by the slumber, and then, to their no slight uneasiness, they were alone in the house, as was ascertained when Janet called vainly again and again for Mistress Brower.

“Why has she gone away when we should be waited upon?” Percy asked petulantly, and his sister set about the attempt to give him a better understanding of the situation.

“You must remember, Percy, that she is not bound to wait on us. But for her we would have been sadly put upon by those vile men, and it is not for us to complain because she fails to act as our servant.”

“She had no right to bring us here unless it was to look after us properly. We wanted to go home, but she forced us to come to this place.”

“Percy dear, we have reason to be very thankful to her. I can’t imagine what is happening in the city; but it is certain that the common people no longer obey our uncle, the Major, and are ready to show their hatred for him by abusing us. Don’t forget that if you would be a gentleman, it is necessary you be courteous to one who has rendered us a great service.”

“I intend to be a gentleman, Janet,” the little fellow replied with great show of dignity as he sat on the edge of the bed swinging his feet impatiently; “but that is no reason why I should thank a woman for bringing us here when we wanted to go home. This isn’t a very nice house.”

“It shelters us from those terrible men, and Mistress Brower has given us the right to be here. Think, Percy, that you were willing to eat the food she put before us, and to lie on her bed. Having received so much from her, you can do no less than be thankful.”

“So I will be, and our uncle, the Major, will repay her for what we have eaten—”

“It is not good breeding, Percy, to speak of paying for food which was offered us as guests.”

"Then I won't speak of it, Janet; but I doubt not she counted on getting money from our uncle. Now I want to go home."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the opening of the door, and good Mistress Brower, looking flushed and excited, appeared on the threshold.

"I counted on being here when you wakened," she said in a tone of apology; "but there are such dreadful goings on in the city that one can't move about as at other times, and I was delayed by crowds of half-grown boys an' men who appear to have lost their senses entirely."

"Haven't the soldiers driven them off the streets?" Percy asked in surprise.

"No, my child, and what is more strange, no one has come out of the fort, although the riotous mob has pressed up to the very gates, defying the Governor's authority, and daring Major James to carry out his threat of driving them from the city. Those who began the disturbance against the stamped paper were some of our best citizens; but once the lawless inhabitants gathered in force, that which was to have been a peaceable remonstrance against the

injustice of the English government, has become a furious riot. The streets are thronged with brutes in human shape, who take this opportunity of plundering and destroying."

Percy looked incredulous, and Janet asked in surprise:

"Do these wicked people believe that our uncle, the Major, doesn't dare to punish them?"

"They have good reason for so believing, my child. The cannon of the outer battery have been spiked so that the mob cannot use them, and all the soldiers remain under cover, although they should be in the streets to keep order. The city is delivered up to the brutes."

"But our uncle will come out with the soldiers when he thinks it necessary," Janet said in a tone of conviction, and Mistress Brower shrugged her shoulders as if in despair of being able to make the children understand the situation.

"It is time we went to Ranelagh," Percy said when he had waited vainly a few seconds for his sister to speak. "We thank you for the food, and will go now."

The child slipped down from the bed and

took up his hat, which had been cleaned and placed near at hand.

“ You can never reach there, my dear, and if the people on the street get an inkling of who you are, matters will be worse than they were this morning, for now the rioters are crazed with strong drink. Twice has my husband tried to get word into the fort that you are here; but both the soldiers and the mob threatened his life if he did not give over the attempt. The one would not listen when he declared it was necessary to speak with Major James, and the other believed him a traitor to what they call ‘the cause.’ ”

“ My uncle would have listened if your husband told him he came from us,” Janet said, closing her lips tightly as if believing the good woman was deliberately trying to deceive them.

“ Hundreds of the rioters are calling for Major James to show himself, and my husband could not well make himself heard above all the uproar. The soldiers believed he was one of the lawless crowd.”

“ Will you go home with me, Janet? ” Percy asked as he stepped toward the door, and Mistress Brower, understanding that the children

did not put full confidence in her reports, stepped back in order that she might not appear as if trying to prevent them from leaving her house.

Janet looked toward her inquiringly; but receiving no reply, she answered Percy by making ready to depart.

During a few seconds Mistress Brower remained silent, irritated because the children would not believe what she had stated, and then the motherly instinct triumphed over petulance.

"It would be worse than wicked to let you two babes go into the streets alone. I will do all a woman may to prevent you from being ill-treated by those who profess to be citizens simply trying to preserve their rights; but it would be far better if you could be prevailed upon to remain quietly here until the lawlessness has come to an end."

"Our uncle, the Major, will see to it that we are treated properly," Janet said quietly, and this unswerving faith in Major James' ability to make headway against the mob which, for the time being, held possession of the city, caused Mistress Brower to lose her temper once more.

“ The king’s officers have their hands full trying to care for themselves ; but since it is impossible to make you understand what is going on, perhaps it is best you should see for yourselves. It’s a case of buying experience, and that’s the only way children are willing to get it.”

“ We only count on going to Ranelagh, and while those vile people are at the fort they will not try to prevent us,” Janet said, now fully decided that it was time for them to leave their place of refuge.

Mistress Brower sighed because of the perversity displayed, perhaps, and then opened the door of the dwelling, following the children as they passed out, Janet with a courtesy, and Percy with a bow.

“ Are you coming to show us the way ? ” Janet asked as her hostess hesitated an instant, and the good woman replied, as if just having come to a decision :

“ It would be wicked to let you go alone, for I’m much afraid you’ll soon be needing another hiding place.”

Little Mistress Janet, convinced that the good woman had misrepresented the situation

of affairs outside, made no comment, and Percy stalked majestically in advance up the street eager to prove that, having been refreshed by food and slumber, he was well able to protect his sister, as indeed a nephew of Major James should.

The lad was forced to halt at the first corner in order to learn in which direction Ranelagh lay, and Mistress Brower pointed out the course to be pursued, at the same time offering to lead the way.

“ You shall tell me if I make a wrong turn,” Percy said with an air of condescension; “ but my uncle, the Major, would expect me to go in advance of ladies at such a time.”

The good woman turned her head to conceal the smile which came upon her lips, and the tiny royalist went forward believing it was within his feeble power to lead in safety the weaker sex through the streets of a city given over to rioters.

When the party neared Broadway, however, it began to appear very much as if Mistress Brower had not painted the situation in colors sufficiently dark to do the subject full justice, and the blood began to leave Janet’s

cheeks, while Percy slackened pace very perceptibly.

The shadows of night were beginning to lengthen, and not a breath of air was stirring. The lanterns, which by law had been affixed to every seventh building, had not been lighted, probably because of the lawlessness on every hand, and the street through which they were passing seemed doubly dark owing to a bright light, not unlike a conflagration, which could be seen a short distance in advance.

The hum of many voices grew more and more distinct as the children and their guardian neared Broadway, and soon it was seen that the glare of light came from candles fastened to short sticks, carried in metal holders, or even in the bare hands of hundreds upon hundreds of men and boys who were gathering in something approaching a regular formation on the street.

Now it was possible to distinguish the cries, and the children could not fail of hearing the threats made against all the officers of the king who favored the stamp act; but particularly against Major James, because of his threat to clear the city with five hundred artillerymen.

It was much the same scene of lawlessness which had been witnessed in the morning, save that the rioters were more triumphant and outspoken because of having virtually held possession of the city during the past twelve hours.

Even Percy understood that he could not hope to cross the street at this point, and little Mistress Janet was rendered almost wild with terror as she recognized the tall form of the negro who had insulted her when she came ashore from the Friendly Brothers.

“We must not go there!” she whispered hurriedly, and, quickly turning, fled like a startled fawn in the direction from which she had just come, while Mistress Brower pursued, and Percy, his courage rapidly oozing from his fingers’ ends, brought up the rear.

Not until they were on Smith street did the girl slacken pace, and then the good woman who was doing her best to aid perverse children, suggested that they return to her home.

“It is not safe for you two to be out of doors, lest some one recognize you, and surely you can rest content with me until morning. Then, perhaps, the soldiers will clear the streets,” she said persuasively.

"Why don't they clear them now?" Master Percy asked angrily, recovering somewhat of his courage since it was no longer possible to see the rioters.

"Because it is as if the whole city had risen, so my husband says, and for the soldiers to appear would be to bring about horrible bloodshed, since these men, half insane with drink, would fight desperately. Besides, the garrison is not strong enough to venture outside the fortification."

"We must go home!" Janet wailed. "We can't stay anywhere else, and once there our uncle will protect us!"

Again Mistress Brower shrugged her shoulders as if to say that it was folly to hold an argument with such children. She had never a fear for her own safety, because it was well known that Robert Brower was a bitter enemy to taxation without representation, as the statesmen of Boston had declared, therefore she said readily:

"While the men are forming in line on Broadway we may be able to get across the city in front of them, if it so be you are set on trying to reach Ranelagh this night."

"We must go! We must go!" Janet wailed, and Percy declared that he would proceed alone with his sister if Mistress Brower did not dare make the attempt.

Then the good woman set out, holding Janet by the hand, and giving but little heed to the movements of the lad who believed he was able to care for himself.

Down Smith street to Wall, and then toward Broadway the three went at the best possible rate of speed, when suddenly they were brought to a standstill as a party of men with lighted candles came from near about Trinity church-yard, while another company marched out of the grounds surrounding the Presbyterian meeting house.

Now those who would gain the shelter of Ranelagh were between two sections of the mob, and a short distance up Broadway appeared the front ranks of the rioters who had been seen previously.

"Heaven help us!" Mistress Brower exclaimed piously. "We are in a fix now, an' I'm to blame for not forcing these children to remain in my own home!"

"What is to be done?" Janet whispered

tremulously, and Percy came much nearer the good woman than he would have been willing to do under less dangerous circumstances.

"Keep close to me, and hide your faces in my gown when the reprobates come too near. We must stand here until they have gone by."

Mistress Brower had yet to learn that rioters cannot well be avoided against their desires, and that it is sometimes impossible to remain wherever one chooses.

When the three sections of the mob came together at nearabout the point where the good woman and the two children were standing, it seemed as if the one thought in the minds of all the lawless ones was to take advantage of this chance meeting. For the moment the real purpose of their march was forgotten in the brutish desire to inflict pain, and straightway twenty men or more began tormenting the helpless trio, by pulling them this way and that, forcing them to fall into line again and again, or by jeering and hooting in their ears.

"Do not speak whatever the villains may do," Mistress Brower whispered to Janet, and the girl repeated the warning to her brother; but he either could, or would not, keep his tem-

per in check, and at the first show of rough play fell into a passion.

Fortunately the half-frenzied men and boys were making so much noise that Percy's angry words could not be heard above the uproar, otherwise all that lawless gathering would speedily have learned they had unwittingly come across those relatives of Major James, concerning whom it was told that they were at the mercy of the rioters earlier in the day, before there was danger that serious injury might be inflicted.

Particularly because of his display of temper was Percy pulled and hauled from one to the other; sometimes tossed high in the air; again forced to march to and fro until his clothing was torn, and his body bruised quite as much as he was hurt mentally.

The lad finally ceased to shout defiance and threaten what punishment would follow such outrage, for he came to understand that "a silent tongue is a warm friend," and when he had arrived at this stage the rioters failed to find the same enjoyment in him as when he struggled and scolded.

While Percy was thus being ill-treated,

Janet begged humbly to those nearest that her brother be released, and implored Mistress Brower to interpose in his behalf; but the good woman knew full well that she would do more mischief than good by interfering.

“Now we’re in the scrape he must take the rough handling as best he may, for the more one says to these brutes the worse they’ll behave. My only hope is that your brother will not succeed in telling the drunken fools who he is, else there’ll be serious trouble for all of us.”

“If we can only get back to your home I’ll be content to stay there so long as you shall say,” the poor child moaned. “Why was I so foolish as to believe I knew best what might be done?”

“It’s too late to cry for spilled milk, my child,” Mistress Brower said soothingly as she covered the weeping girl with the folds of her dress. “These scoundrels will soon tire of their play, and then we’ll go back where there’s no fear of their following.”

After badgering Percy until fear and pain rendered him silent, some of the bolder spirits would have made Mistress Brower the butt of

their sport; but she defended herself bravely, crying shrilly to those who advanced:

“ Robert Brower is my husband, and you who are acquainted with him know full well that he’ll repay with interest any injury done me. You are a good-for-nothing crowd of drunken loafers, who can accomplish no more than bring reproach upon honest men. Stand back and leave my children alone, or it shall go hard with all hands when my husband comes!”

“ Bob Brower is my friend,” one of the men said with drunken gravity, “ an’ I’ll see to it that his family has fair treatment.”

It was this fellow who finally rescued Percy, believing him to be Master Brower’s son, for now the clothing of the children had suffered to such an extent that the garments did not betray them as belonging to a higher station in life than that occupied by the good woman who was so bravely defending them.

But this alleged “ friend of Bob Brower’s ” would not allow that his efforts in behalf of the family should end at this point; he insisted that Mistress Brower could not safely go home unattended; therefore she must accompany the mob.

Now it was the good woman's turn to scold and threaten; but all to no purpose. The rioters in the rear pressed forward, and the three fugitives were forced to accompany the mob, since it was not possible to make their escape.

Percy was clinging desperately to Mistress Brower's skirts, no longer claiming his right to act the part of protector, and she said consolingly to the children as they were borne onward by sheer press of numbers :

“ We can do no less than humor them, my dears. The simpletons will soon tire of such sport, and then we may slip away.”

Thus it was that these three, who had set out in the hope of gaining Ranelagh, were compelled to witness the scenes of outrage at the fort, unable to extricate themselves from the dense throng which pressed upon them from all sides, and oftentimes crowded almost to the verge of suffocation.

They were in full view of the fort, but unable to make known to the officer who would have aided them at peril of his life, the sore straits into which they had fallen.

Percy plucked up a little courage when the mob halted almost at the very walls of the forti-

fication and began jeering and shouting, defying the Governor, General Gage and Major James in the same breath, for then he confidently expected to see the soldiers sally forth; but never a man showed himself above the ramparts. It was as if the king's officers and men were afraid of being seen.

The silence of those whose business it was to defend the fort emboldened the rioters; they pressed closer, even under the very muzzles of the cannon, defying the commander to open fire, and urging him who had threatened to clear the town to set about his work, if he still believed it could be done.

It was a horrible scene, and Janet and Percy were overwhelmed by bewildering despair that their uncle, the Major, would tamely submit to such insults.

Then came a diversion, as another body of men, numbering three or four hundred, marched down Broadway with lighted candles and torches, surrounding a certain something which was being carried in a chair on the shoulders of a tall sailor.

The throng around the children burst into shouts of joy at the coming of these reinforce-

ments, and the cries were followed by peals of mirth when it was seen that the object carried by the sailor was nothing more nor less than a paper figure of the Governor.

Just for an instant Mistress Brower believed the time had come when she and the children might make their escape, for the mob were pressing toward the new-comers in such numbers that they were free to move a short distance in either direction.

"Now we must slip away," she said in a low tone, tightening her clasp of the children's hands. "Keep close by me, and do not speak, no matter what may be said!"

It was the alleged friend of her husband's who prevented the flight. In his befuddled mind it was necessary he remain by the good woman's side, and even more essential that she be kept in the midst of those who imagined they were teaching the king a valuable lesson.

"Here, here, you can't slip away like that, or Bob Brower never'd forgive me," he cried, clutching the woman's dress. "I've undertaken to see that no harm comes to you, an' I'll do my duty like a man."

"You're worse than a brute!" Mistress

Brower cried angrily as she tried to release her garments from his grasp, and before it was possible to succeed, the opportunity for escape had passed.

“The Governor wants his coach!” some one cried, and immediately the mob was seized by a new fancy.

“The coach! The coach!” they cried, pressing forward toward his excellency’s stables, and forcing the children and Mrs. Brower along with them.

CHAPTER V

RANELAGH

Now it must be understood that in the days when the stamp act was passed, and when it was repealed, the residence of the Governor of New York was within the walls of the fort at the extreme point of the peninsula. This fortification was the strongest and best equipped in the province, and around it the citizens had laid out pleasure grounds, where in their hours of idleness they might enjoy the cool breezes which came from off the harbor, at the same time they feasted their eyes on the military parade, and were regaled by the strains from the military band.

Near by this fort, which ever bore the name of the reigning sovereign of England, the chief citizens had erected their residences that they might overlook the little park known as Bowling Green, and therefore it was that the rioters

of November, 1765, committed their greatest excesses in the fashionable dwelling quarter of the city.

As has been said, inside the walls of the fort stood the government house, and just outside, near the angle which faced Bowling Green, was the residence of the Governor's secretary. Directly behind this last dwelling were the Governor's stables.

The secretary, his family, and all the servants, including the grooms of the stables, fled for shelter within the walls of the fort when the rioting began, and, therefore, was it possible for the lawless men to plunder or destroy at will.

Just one more word by way of explanation, and then the events of that first day of November, better known as "Stamp Act Day," shall be related in regular order. Lossing, the historian, tells us that "Major James' beautiful mansion stood on an eminence a little east of the present intersection of Anthony street and West Broadway, and was called Ranelagh. There were only three or four coaches in the city at that time, and as they belonged to wealthy friends of the government, they were

considered by the people as evidences of aristocratic pride. Such was the prejudice against the name of coach, that Robert Murray, a Quaker merchant who owned one, called his a 'leathern convenience.' Master Colden's coach was made in England for Sir Henry Moore, the absent Governor-in-Chief."

When it was suggested that the paper image of the Governor should be seated in his excellency's coach, the rioters dashed wildly in the direction of the stables, carrying with them Mistress Brower and the children, despite all their efforts to the contrary.

Although it was not possible for these three to see all which was done, they understood by the sound of blows against the coach-house doors that the barrier was being demolished by improvised battering-rams, and a few moments later shouts of triumph told that the frenzied rabble were in possession of the carriage.

It so chanced that the coach was drawn out to a point very near where the children and Mistress Brower were virtually held prisoners by the throng, and therefore it was they saw all the preparations which were made for that mad march through the streets of the city, which

ended with the burning of the coach and effigy of Governor Colden on Bowling Green in full view of those within the fort.

The paper figure was fastened on the rear seat of the vehicle; one of the rioters mounted the coachman's box, and speedily a whip was put in his hands. Then a long, stout rope was attached to the front axle, and to this an hundred or more harnessed themselves, shouting in drunken fury threats against the king's officers.

Mistress Brower noted the fact that here and there among the mob were reputable citizens, who were using every argument to prevent the people from committing such mad acts; but all in vain. Those who had let loose the rabble of the city could no longer make even a show of restraining them, and only the forbearance of the Governor and his advisers prevented bloodshed.

“To the Exchange! To the Exchange!” the mob shouted, and good Mistress Brower's hopes revived.

“If they set off around the city we will be able to get out of this snarl,” she whispered to Janet, “and once free from the crowd I'll

attend to this stupid drunkard who insists on playing the part of escort."

"Do not say anything to anger him," Janet implored, for she had come to understand that against this uprising of the lower orders her uncle, the Major, was powerless, and her experience had been so harsh that she no longer dared make any claims of superior station.

"I won't say very much," Mistress Brower replied grimly. "It would be useless to bandy words with such as he; but I'll surprise him woefully."

Percy, sore with the buffeting and crushing of the throng, no longer took it upon himself to dictate as to their movements. He, like his sister, had come to realize of how slight importance the kinsfolk of Major James might be at such a time, and there was little fear he would endeavor to make public the relationship.

When the coach was drawn away the majority of the rioters followed it; but there remained behind two hundred or more who were not inclined to march any further, and these were sufficient to prevent the children from

making known their whereabouts to the defenders of the fort.

Just for a moment Mistress Brower fancied it might be possible, by taking the children close under the walls of the fortification, to attract the Major's attention to them; but when she would have advanced in that direction, the man who had taken upon himself the office of "Bob Brower's friend" raised such a clamor because, as he believed, she was exposing herself to danger, that the others gathered around, thus preventing the good woman from carrying out her hastily formed plan.

Then it was she turned upon the officious, self-elected guardian, and cried angrily:

"I want no more of you or your interference! If you really are acquainted with my husband, you know full well that he won't brook such foolishness from the likes of you."

"I'm his friend," the man replied, speaking thickly as does one whose tongue is tied by strong drink. "You're to be protected while we're givin' the king a lesson, an' I'm the one to do it. Keep back there!" he cried to those who gathered around curiously. "Mistress

Brower is in my care, an' she's not to be bothered by you."

"Come, child," the good woman said to Janet in a low tone, and the three hurried toward Broadway, followed by the man.

"He will stay close at our heels, and we shall never be rid of him," the girl whispered in distress, and instead of replying, Mistress Brower appeared to be seeking something on the ground.

"Come back here! Come back!" the man cried, hurrying after her. "It ain't safe for decent people to be abroad this night when we're showin' Governor Colden an' that brute of a major that they are of precious little consequence in this town."

Mistress Brower was near the corner of Beaver street by the time her alleged friend overtook her, and then she found that for which she sought.

A stout staff which had been dropped by one of the rioters was in her hands, and as the fellow came within striking distance she swung it around quickly, striking him on the head with resounding force.

He fell like one dead, and Janet cried in terror:

“ You’ve killed him! He is dead!”

“ Not a bit of it,” the good woman said in a tone of unconcern. “ Those kind of creatures are not killed so readily. He’ll soon come to himself, and it’s to be hoped will have all his senses by that time. We must not linger here if we count on gaining Ranelagh to-night. There are loafers enough yonder to put an end to all our plans unless we take advantage of this opportunity.”

Then, with Percy clinging to one hand and Janet to the other, Mistress Brower began what was a veritable flight, half running or walking at her best pace until the heavy breathing of her companions told that they were in sore need of rest.

“ We’ll wait here until you get your breath, and then we must go on again, for we’ll not be safe until those brawlers have been left far behind.”

“ I will keep pace with you, no matter how tired I am,” Percy said, struggling bravely to appear at his ease. “ We should have staid in

your home, and I know my uncle, the Major, would say I ought to make apology for not having done as you wished."

"We won't trouble our heads about apologies, my little man. It wasn't to be expected that you could have perfect faith in me when I declared that Major James was powerless to help you, and if we succeed in getting to Ranelagh, no great harm will have been done."

"No harm; but much good to us," Janet added gravely. "But for you, Mistress Brower, I fear we would have been killed outright, when the people discovered who we are. My uncle will thank you for your kindness to us."

"Bless your heart, what little I've done has been for two poor children whose mother is in heaven, and not to earn thanks or reward from the officer who would have driven us from our homes in order to show his power."

"I am certain our uncle, the Major, never intended to do wrong against the people, because he is a very kind man."

"And it's not for one like me to say anything out of the way about him to you, dearie, therefore we won't bother our heads over that

part of it; but bend all our energies to getting into Ranelagh before you are entirely worn out."

Once more the fugitives pressed forward, and the flight was continued much longer than would have been the case had good Mistress Brower been more familiar with the location of Major James' residence.

They traveled a full mile further than was absolutely necessary, and this detour, together with the frequent halts made when the children absolutely needed a rest, occupied not less than two hours.

In the meantime the rioters had dragged the coach in which was placed the effigy of Governor Colden, to the Coffee House and the Merchants' Exchange, escorted by six hundred or more men all bearing lighted candles or torches, and at each place their more dissolute leaders made speeches counselling yet greater violence. It was even suggested that the dwellings of those who were friendly to the king be sacked and burned, and to this advice the mob, infuriated by their own success, listened eagerly.

In order to begin the work of pillage and destruction without delay, the coach was drawn

back to Bowling Green, where was met another company who had uprooted the gallows and brought it to the fort "to hang the red-coats," as many loudly declared.

It was both difficult and dangerous to begin the work of hanging, however, and the lawless throng contented themselves with planting the gallows directly in front of the fort gate, with threats as to what should be done next morning. While all this was going on those in charge of the coach kindled a fire under it, and soon the occupants of the fort could see the carriage burning fiercely, as around it danced the brawlers, until some one cried:

"If we're to make an end of the houses owned by the king's friends, let's begin with that of Major James!"

"We'll begin with the Major's house!" the mob shouted gleefully, caught by this new suggestion, and away they ran, leaving the ruins of the coach yet burning, and the gallows planted against the gate.

The lawless throng took a more direct route to Ranelagh than that pursued by Mistress Brower, and traveled at a much swifter pace, therefore it was that at the very moment the

children were indulging in exclamations of joy because they were at their journey's end, the foremost of the rioters appeared in view.

"Come quickly!" Janet cried nervously, tugging at Mistress Brower's hand to urge her forward. "We must get inside before they see us!"

"Once we have the doors bolted they may shout till they get tired, for they can't hurt us," Percy said triumphantly, and he would have pressed forward running, but that the good woman held him back.

"Remember, children, that I have not given you foolish or wrong advice since we first met, and be guided by me now. Those drunken brutes have come this way for no other purpose than to do mischief, and you will be safer outside the house than in."

"They can't get at us once the doors are barred and bolted," Percy said confidently, struggling to free himself from Mistress Brower's detaining grasp.

"You did not believe they would dare to show themselves in front of the fort, and was certain your uncle would speedily drive them away; but yet you were wrong. There is noth-

ing out here in the country to attract such as they, except the house itself, and in spite of bolts and bars they'll soon find a way of entrance."

Percy was not convinced; but Janet had profited by past experience, and she said after a brief hesitation:

"We would be ungrateful children, not to follow your advice, yet it does seem impossible those vile creatures would dare enter our uncle's dwelling."

"We can hide ourselves here in the bushes, and if the brutes pass on, we shall have been delayed only a few moments. If it is their purpose to destroy the mansion, and you were found inside, no one can say to what lengths they might not go."

Much against their inclination the children allowed themselves to be drawn into a place of hiding at such a distance from Ranelagh that there was little danger the rioters would come that way, and before many moments had passed it was learned that Mistress Brower had guessed rightly the purpose of the mob.

The lawless throng had come prepared to effect an entrance without delay. Two parties

of twenty each carried what appeared to be huge beams, or the spars of a ship, and with these the main doors of the dwelling were speedily shattered.

From the rear poured out a stream of servants, white and black, and all of these the rioters speedily captured, forcing them to remain in a body in front of the house, where they were obliged to endure the rough sport of men who were hardly conscious of the pain they inflicted.

While some were torturing the helpless servants, others were pillaging the interior, and after a few moments, rich furniture, costly ornaments, valuable paintings and books were flung out through the closed windows, sending showers of splintered glass among the prisoners at the expense of many a serious wound.

Half a dozen men came out with the colors of the Major's regiment; yet another party bore aloft a red silk curtain, which would serve them in lieu of a flag, and all the while the more brutish were laboring most earnestly to cut and hew into shapeless splinters the household goods scattered everywhere around.

It was such a scene as would have horrified

the most impartial spectator, and to the children it seemed as if this was in reality an attack upon their uncle—as if in some way he was suffering bodily pain because of the brutality.

“It is horrible!” Janet said amid her sobs. “Can’t we go away from here?”

“Please try to get back to your home, Mistress Brower! They will kill us if we are found, and some of them have been looking over this way,” Percy wailed.

The good woman shared the distress of the children, and was even concerned regarding her own property, understanding full well that once the mob was fully imbued with the spirit of destruction the home of friend and foe alike would be pillaged.

Now, however, she did not dare attempt to gain the vicinity of King street. It had suddenly come into her mind that the fort was the only safe place of refuge, and her one desire was to get within the walls.

“It is your uncle who must aid us now!” she said tremulously, and Janet’s terror was increased as she understood that for the first time since morning was Mistress Brower frightened.

“If we only could be with him!” the girl

said piteously, and it was as if that tone of fear and anguish gave to the good woman an idea which might be of value.

“There’s no fear those brutes will give heed to anything save that horrible work, until everything has been destroyed. We might make our way around by the rope-walks to the water front. Then, perhaps, it would be possible to come upon the fort on the side near the custom house, or yet nearer the shore; but the journey will be a long one.”

“Don’t think of that, but let us set off. Anything, anything rather than staying here!” Janet cried, and Percy, clasping his arms around her neck, added his entreaties to hers.

It was indeed a long distance to traverse in the darkness, and when the children were nearly exhausted with the efforts already made; but Mistress Brower had come to believe that their lives were really in danger, and she led the way cautiously through the bushes.

Many times before the fugitives gained Elias Degrushes’ rope-walk was Mistress Brower forced to carry Percy in her arms, and although that small gentleman was so fatigued that only with difficulty could he make his way over the

rough ground, he objected most strenuously to being thus aided by a woman.

“ My uncle, the Major, has said very often that it is the duty of a gentleman to assist women, instead of being assisted by them, and if it were possible I would take both you and Janet in my arms,” he said when, despite his feeble resistance, the good wife lifted him from the ground, and she replied, kissing him on the cheek :

“ I know that full well, my little man. Your will is good enough for a body five times the size of yours; but just now it is the women who must aid you if we would see again that famous uncle of yours.”

Janet was no less brave than her brother. Her silk shoes had been cut and worn by the frozen ground, and her feet were bleeding from several wounds; but she kept the pace so far as was possible, and made excuses which were piteous because of her stout-heartedness under such circumstances, when she stumbled now and then against the woman who was making such heroic efforts to save them from the mob.

When, finally, they were come to the water’s edge at the rope-walk dock, Mistress Brower

understood that the children could not by any possibility continue the journey on foot, and cast about her for some means to aid them.

A small boat, in which was a pair of oars, lay moored at the dock, and this seemed to afford a solution of the problem.

“We must e'en try our hand at rowing,” she said decidedly. “I dare say it will be possible for me to manage so small a vessel, and if we do not take possession of her, then has our journey come to an end.”

“But the boat does not belong to us, and our uncle, the Major, has told me again and again that it is not only wicked to steal; but unbecoming a gentleman,” Percy said in weak protest.

“I grant you all that, my little man; but this is to save our lives, perhaps, and your uncle can send the craft back by one of the soldiers. We will do no more than borrow it for a few hours.”

Then the journey was continued by water, and near about midnight, when the rioters, overcome by fatigue or strong drink, had sought shelter for the night, or were sleeping like pigs on the streets, the sentinel on duty at

the sea wall of the fort heard a hail in a woman's voice, and straightway called the officer of the guard.

"I have here Major James' kinsfolk, who have been in great danger from the rabble," Mistress Brower cried, and without loss of more time than was absolutely necessary, the Major appeared on the scene.

The rescue had been accomplished, and as he lifted Percy tenderly out of the skiff the small man said sleepily and apologetically:

"I tried to be a gentleman, uncle; but my legs were tired, and this good woman has carried me in her arms."

And Janet said when the Major took her in turn from the boat:

"We have both been rude to good Mistress Brower, uncle, and I pray that you will give her thanks, for save she had stood our friend we might never have seen you again."

It can well be imagined that the children were taken without loss of time to the Governor's residence, and Mistress Brower went with them, there to receive not only thanks from the Major, but from Governor Colden himself.

Indeed, had she been so minded, the occu-

pants of the fort would have repaid her richly for all the labor and anxiety she had undergone; but every gift was refused. The good woman declared that she had only done as would any other mother who had found the children in their time of distress, and when Percy and Janet were snugly tucked up in such a bed as Mistress Brower had never before seen, she would have left the fort.

To this Major James would not consent, however, since the city was far from being in a peaceful condition, and before it was safe for her to return home it had been agreed that she should act as nurse to those whom she had saved, during such time as they might need a mother's care.

Not until two days more had elapsed was the city freed from the rioters, and then the task had only been accomplished after Governor Colden promised faithfully to have nothing to do with the stamps save to send them back to England.

In the same ship which had brought the stamps, Major James, the two children, and Mistress Brower sailed for England, while "Bob Brower" remained behind to look after

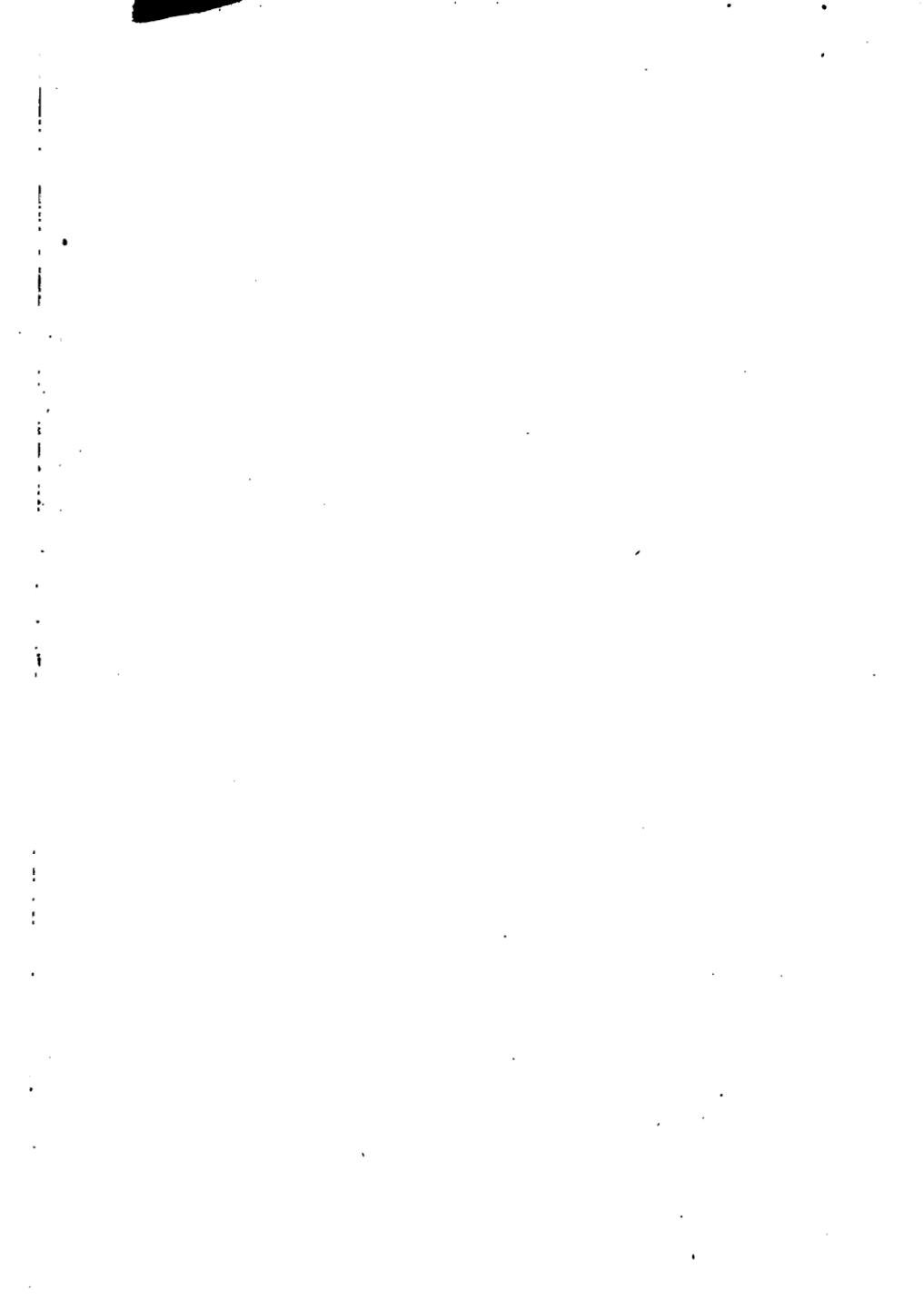
what had been left of the Major's property, and when the king's officer returned to New York, oddly enough it was he who brought the news that the Stamp Act had been repealed.

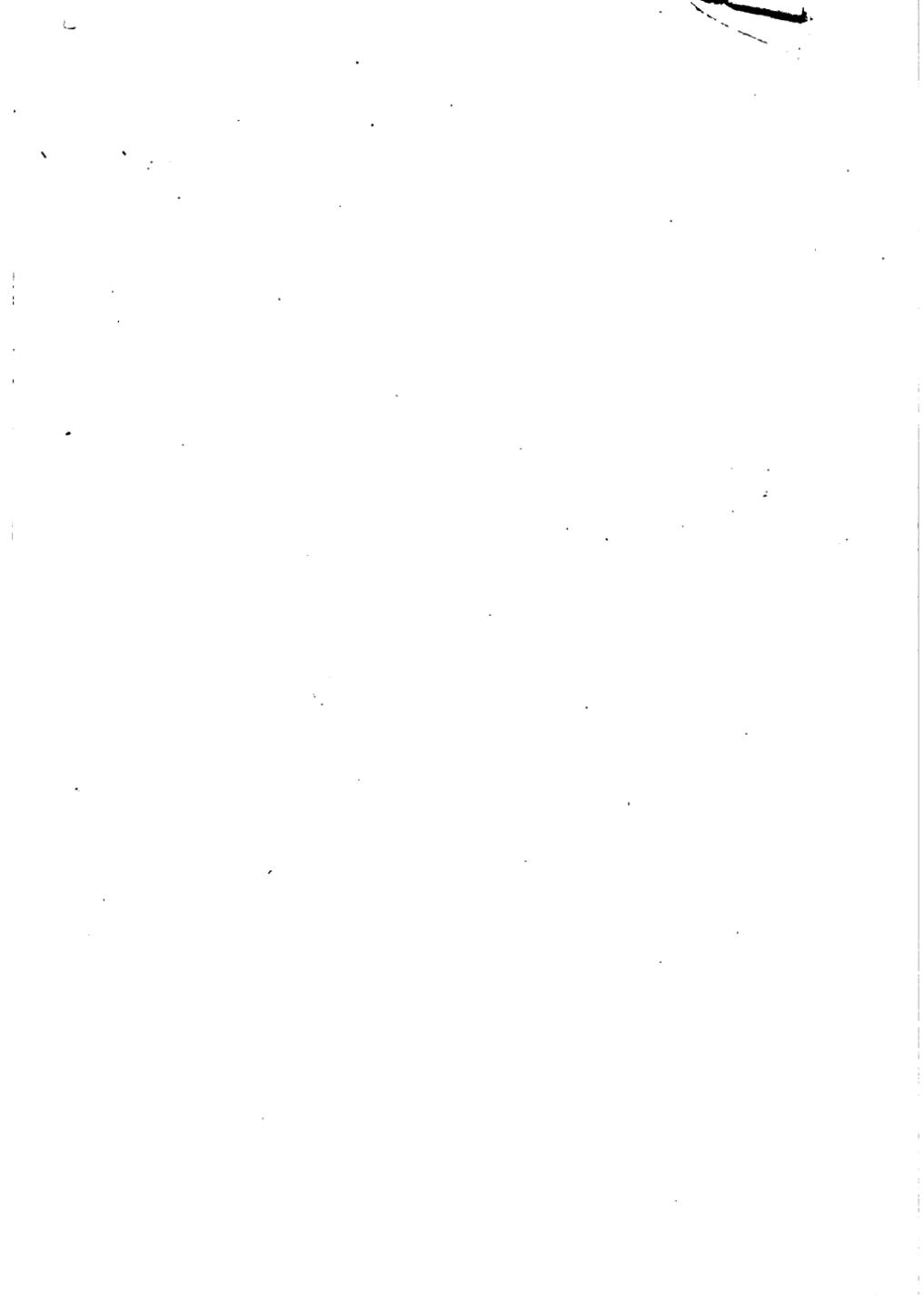
This satisfactory state of affairs was not brought about until after several months, and of the efforts of the colonists to show the king that they were ready to resist oppression, the historian has written :

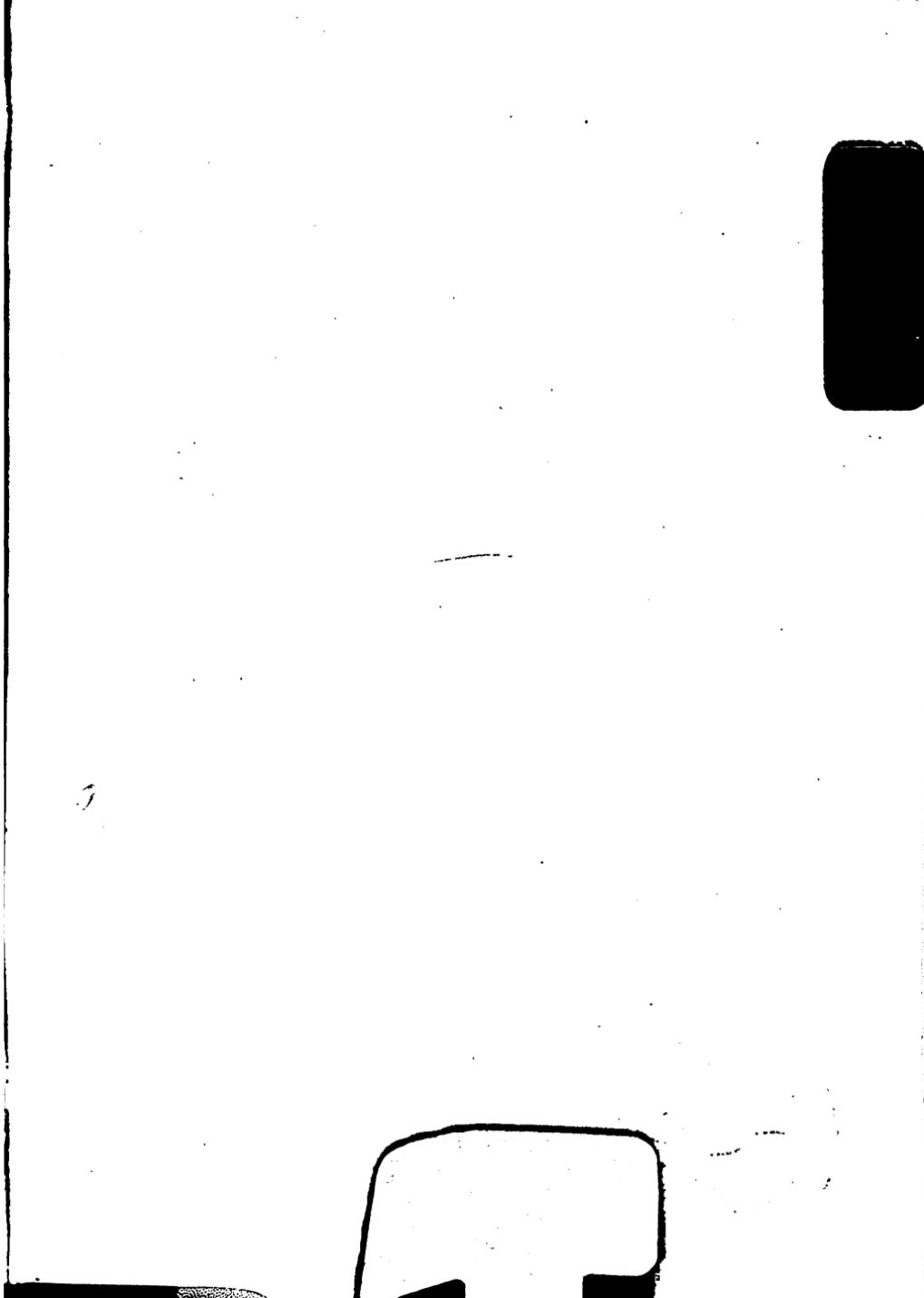
“ Governor Colden ordered the stamps to be delivered to Mayor Cruger, and this being satisfactory to the people, quiet was restored. Yet the colonists were no less vigilant, and efforts to enforce a repeal of the obnoxious act were everywhere made. Non-importation agreements were numerously signed; the hum of spinning-wheels and the clatter of shuttles were heard in almost every household, and rich men and women, who commonly walked in broad-cloths and brocades, now appeared, on all occasions, in homespun garments.”

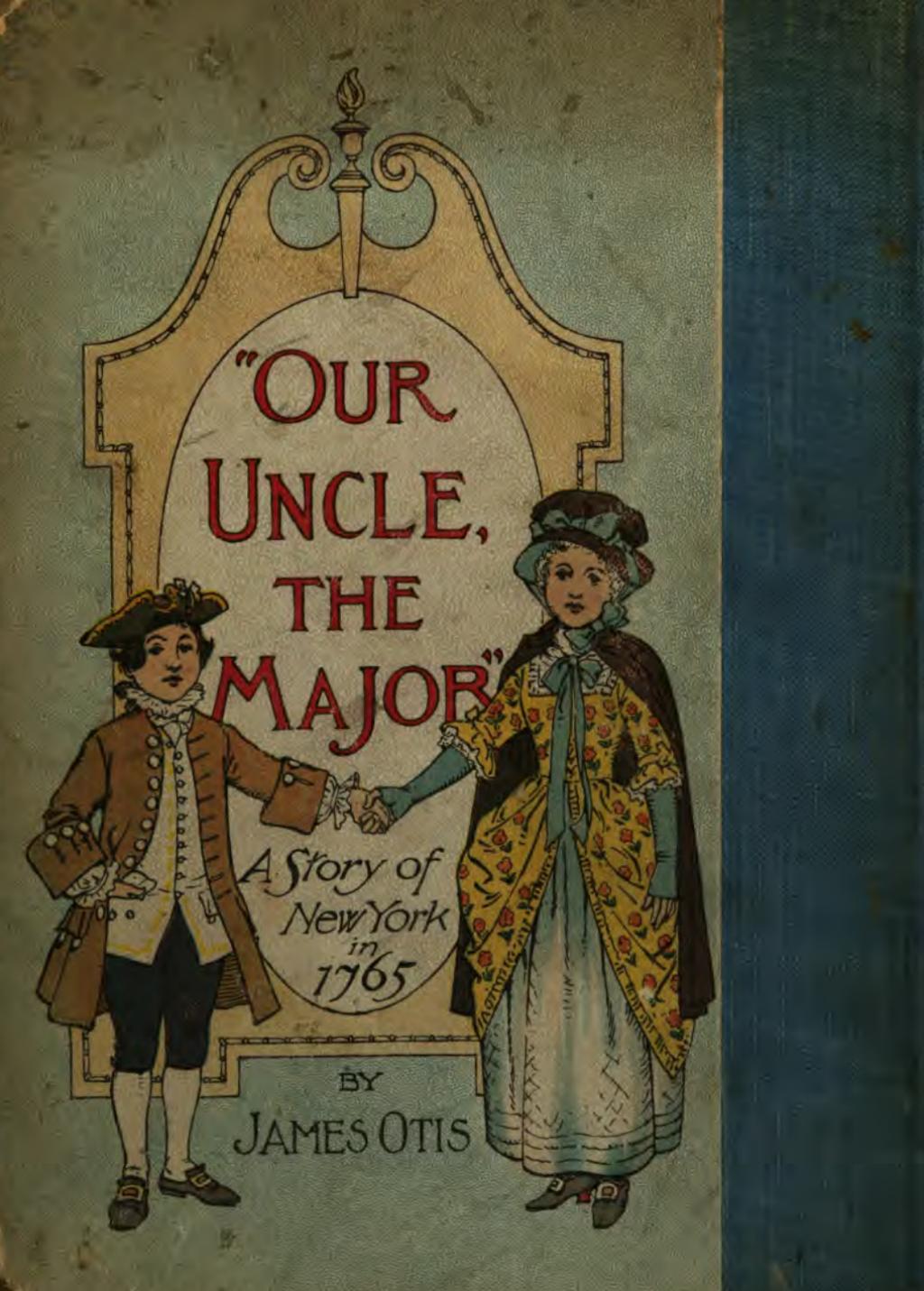
THE END.











"OUR UNCLE, THE MAJOR"

*A Story of
New York
in
1765*

BY
JAMES OTIS